

SHOPFRONTS *and* SHOP SIGNS

This Supplementary Planning Guidance provides a policy framework and design guidance for those who influence the design of shopfronts and shop signs in Poole.

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide a policy framework and design guidance for those who influence the design of shopfronts and shop signs, such as retailers and shopfitters. It offers a general guide to solutions that have been found acceptable. It is not intended to inhibit imaginative design.

This guidance supplements the policies in the Poole Local Plan and provides an opportunity for greater detail to be given. In Chapter 5 of the Plan there are specific policies for shopfronts and shop signs at BE4, BE5 and BE17. These policies seek to ensure that new shopfronts and shop signs are sensitively designed to relate in size, design, materials and the siting of the signs to the building on which they are located. It is the Council's intention to conserve traditional shopfronts and ensure a high standard of design relating to any work for refurbishment, new shopfronts and signs.

In this document "shop" is defined as including all retail premises, whatever their location, and all commercial premises, including banks, betting offices, restaurants, public houses, estate agents, building societies, within shopping areas.

It is recommended that proposals are discussed with the Planning Officers prior to the submission of any application.

The Importance of Shopfronts and Signs

Shopfronts and shop signs form an important visual feature encountered regularly by everyone in their day to day lives. Indeed, for most people, shopfronts and shop signs are the most visually important feature of a commercial centre, often to the exclusion of the quality of the buildings above. The maintenance of good shopfronts and the encouragement of a high quality of design in new shopfronts is vital to the improvement of the environment of an area.

This document sets seven general principles which proposals for new and altered shopfronts and shop signs must take into account. It then offers detailed design guidance (codes) for the design and restoration of shopfronts, advertisements and shop signs.

While it is understood that each shopfront and sign must make an impression on the passer-by and shopper alike, it is important that care is taken that their design and materials do not clash with or detract from existing attractive features of the building or the area.

In recent years new materials and construction techniques have allowed the introduction of structurally independent shopfronts and large expanses of glass. Illumination of signs has also become more commonplace. All these factors have meant a dramatic change in the appearance of shopping streets.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS AND SHOP SIGNS

Well designed shopfronts and shop signs will benefit everyone. By being in keeping with the character and style of the building of which they form part and with the history of the area in which they are situated they will benefit the area. They will also entice people into the shop to browse and so benefit the shop owner.

In order to achieve well designed shopfronts and shop signs the following general principles must be followed:



Boone's, High Street -
A well proportioned traditional shopfront.

- 1 Where the existing shopfront or shop sign is a period shopfront/shop sign which contributes to the character of the building and the surrounding area it should be retained. This may involve sensitive renovation work and careful restoration.**
- 2 Where an existing shopfront or shop sign which is unsympathetic to the character of the building is proposed for renewal, any proposed alteration should aim to improve significantly the appearance by integrating it into the building in terms of its design, appearance and scale. Existing features of historical or architectural interest should be retained. The replacement shopfront or shop sign should relate well to adjoining buildings and the building's position in the street scene.**
- 3 Replacement shopfronts or shop signs in historic buildings should generally reflect the historic details of the building with a traditional style of shopfront. Alternatively, a style from another period may be used provided it relates sympathetically to the building and the surrounding area. All details should be stylistically and historically accurate.**
- 4 Where the shopfront or shop sign is new it should be designed to respect the period and style of the building and the form and proportions of the better shopfronts or shop signs in the area in which it is located.**
- 5 Refurbished and new shopfronts should be contained within the space originally designed for the shop unit. They should not interfere with or obscure the surrounding facade or traditional elements.**

- 6 Inappropriate “period” features such as bow windows and small panes should be avoided in all shopfronts unless there is evidence that such features existed in the original building.
- 7 Refurbished and new shopsigns should be in proportion with the building; they should not unduly dominate any elevation. Generally signs should be contained within any space originally designed for them and should not obscure the surrounding facade or traditional elements.

Shopfront Design

Shopfronts in traditional Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian buildings usually consist of a well designed and proportioned framework of traditional elements, visually supporting the building above.



Elevation

Section

A : CORNICE B : FASCIA C : ARCHITRAVE (Best position for blind box)

A : B : C TOGETHER COMPRISE THE FRIEZE

The elements were used to integrate the shop within the building whilst linking it visually with the street. They framed the shop window and entrance similar to a picture frame.

The individual elements of the frame serve a particular function:

- pilasters identify the vertical division between shopfronts,
- the fascia allows space for advertising,
- the cornice provides a strong line at the top of the shopfront and protection from the weather,
- the stallriser gives protection at ground level and provides a solid base.

These elements are essential to a well designed traditional shopfront and should be retained. Where damaged they should be repaired. Where these elements do not exist they should be replaced in a manner in keeping with the building. All proposed shopfront designs should reflect the principles of forming a frame and incorporate the above elements in an appropriate fashion. Even modern shopfront design relies upon this principle for its success.

The Council's design codes which should be followed in order to achieve a successful shopfront design are set out below:

FASCIAS

• Shopfront Design Code 1

The fascia should be designed to complement the overall shop and building frontage.

First and foremost the fascia should be in proportion with the building and the shopfront, it should look "comfortable" on the building. Whilst it should express the division of the ground floor from the building above it must also be visually strong in terms of depth, material and articulation in order to support the upper floors. As a rule of thumb, fascias should be no greater than one quarter the depth of the shopfront below the fascia. Fascias should not carry extraneous advertisements.

Halifax, High Street -

A new shopfront illustrating well proportioned fascia and stallriser, with subdivided glass.



The top of the fascia should normally be well below the cills of the windows on the first storey. Fascia boards should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront avoiding reflective, garish or fluorescent colours and materials.

Where a false ceiling is to be inserted within the shop it will not be appropriate to increase the fascia depth in conjunction with it. Other methods should be considered to hide a false ceiling such as setting back and forming a splayed bulkhead, obscure or coloured glass or in the detailing of the transom.



STALLRISERS

- **Shopfront Design Code 2**

A stallriser should generally be provided on all new or altered shopfronts.

The stallriser is the area of the shopfront below the display window. It will generally be expected that any new or altered shopfront on a traditional building has a stallriser. It should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront and not treated as an afterthought. A reinforced stallriser can add additional strength to the shopfront and will therefore add to its security.

Historically a stallriser's height was determined by the goods being sold; a clothes shop required a taller display than a jewellers therefore dictating a lower stallriser. However, since shop ownership



Bankes Bistro, Penn Hill -
A substantial and hard wearing tiled stallriser.



Nobel's Restaurant, Ashley Cross -
A low stallriser, decorated with brass plates.

and tenancy can alter after only a few years, a stallriser with a minimum height of 400mm should normally be provided as this will be a reasonable height for most users and will provide a solid visual base to the shopfront.

Stallrisers should be constructed of substantial and hard wearing materials. Flimsy laminates are to be avoided as they soon deteriorate. Panelled painted timber, rendering or other non-reflective materials are preferred. Brickwork or aluminium stallrisers are not normally appropriate, and applied mouldings should be avoided. Large single panes of glass to ground level should be avoided for both visual and security reasons, unless a modern design is adopted which relies upon this for its success.

WINDOWS

• Shopfront Design Code 3

Large areas of glass should be sub-divided by mullions into vertically proportioned sections.

Large areas of undivided plate glass with a horizontal emphasis often have an unsatisfactory relationship with the rest of the building. Vertical emphasis, if properly handled, can produce a more elegant effect. Improvements can be achieved by the sub-division of large areas of glass into vertically proportioned sections. Sometimes, for stylistic reasons, horizontally proportioned sections are required. However these occasions are rare. It is important that in all cases the proportions of the windows and doors reflect those of upper floors.

DOORS

- **Shopfront Design Code 4**

Recessed central doorways should be retained where they already exist or reinstated on older shopfronts where appropriate.

- **Shopfront Design Code 5**

Timber panels should be provided in doors to match the height of the shopfront's stallriser.

In many of the older shops in Poole the entrance door is located in the centre of a shopfront and flanked by display windows. Where it exists, this arrangement should be retained as a traditional design feature. In older shops where it does not exist and the shopfront is to be removed, a return to this arrangement should be achieved, if it is appropriate. When a shopfront is to be refurbished, a door should be provided with timber panelling at the bottom to match the height of the shopfront's stallriser.

Doors to premises above a shop should be designed as an integral part of the facade, with particular respect to scale, design details and the framework of pilasters and frieze (fascia and cornice).

MATERIALS & COLOURS

- **Shopfront Design Code 6**

Materials should be in keeping with the character of the shopfront, building and area.

The materials used for shopfronts (and shop signs) are very significant in determining their character and should relate to the remainder of the facade. Non-traditional materials such as aluminium, glass fibre, perspex, UPVC and acrylic will only be permitted in conservation areas or on Listed Buildings where it is demonstrated that they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and are not detrimental to the character of the building on which they are proposed. In all locations it is likely that they will only be acceptable in dark colours and matt finishes. The use of traditional materials such as timber, stone and render will be encouraged. Non-traditional materials will only be acceptable in dark colours and matt finishes and when they do not detract from the character of the area. Garish or "day-glow" colours and highly reflective materials should be avoided on any building. Imaginative quality design in lettering, illustration, colour and materials will be encouraged.

ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

- **Shopfront Design Code 7**

Applicants should demonstrate that they have taken into account the requirements for disabled access.

It is in the interest of retailers and the public to enable disabled people to have unaided access to retail premises. The Council seeks, where possible, to obtain disabled access to all retail premises. Ideally, access should be level. Frameless glass should be avoided. Applicants should demonstrate that they have taken the requirements for disabled access into account in their design, in order to avoid the necessity for later changes which could disrupt the agreed design.

UNIT SIZE

- **Shopfront Design Code 8**

Proposals for new shopfronts and for new developments to include shopfronts should respect the small historic plot widths seen in the older parts of the Borough when appropriate.

Large parts of Poole's historic retail areas are characterised by small frontages in the 4-7m width range. If a shopfront occupies more than one original shop unit or building then that division should be reflected in the design of the shopfront. Intervening pilasters and capitals should be retained or replaced, and the fascia divided. Where the individual identity of each building needs to be maintained, small scale elements of the design, such as corporate colour or letter style, can be used to unify the otherwise distinct shopfronts. This principle also applies to new buildings in order to reflect small historic plots.

BLINDS & CANOPIES

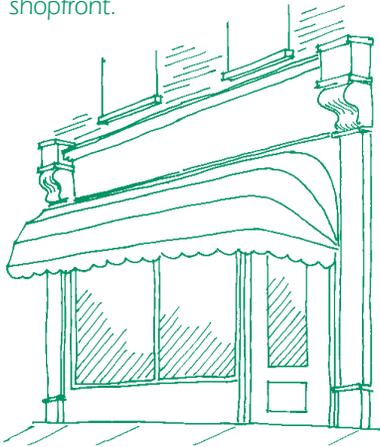
- **Shopfront Design Code 9**

Blinds and canopies should normally be of a traditional style, retractable design and finished in canvas or a similar woven, matt material. Any housings to accommodate a blind or canopy must be considered as an integral part of the shopfront's design.

All the elements of a shopfront should be designed to enhance the appearance of the building. Essential blinds, canopies and shutters should relate sympathetically to the shopfront to which they are attached and contribute to the wider street scene. Non-essential additions to shopfronts should be avoided where they create unnecessary clutter which may obscure and detract from the shopfront.

Dutch Blind -

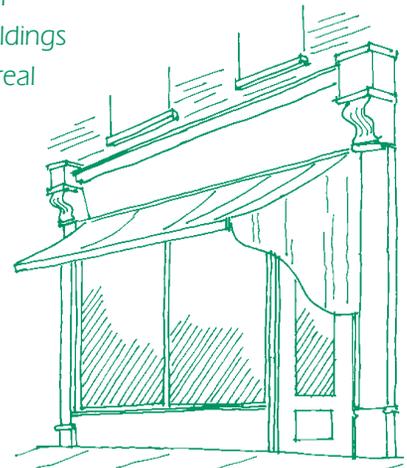
Not appropriate to a traditional shopfront.



Canopies can be a lively addition to the street scene. However, inappropriately designed canopies, including non-traditional Dutch blinds, balloon canopies and those with PVC coverings have a bulky appearance and are of a style which is alien to the majority of buildings. They are normally detrimental to the character and appearance of the building and the area and will generally be resisted.

Attractively designed canopies may however be acceptable, including on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas. However on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas a real need must be demonstrated for them. They are generally

not required in narrow streets or on north facing elevations. They should normally be of traditional design and must preserve or enhance the building or area. In all cases they should be retractable so that the fascia is not permanently obscured. The blind should be finished in canvas or in a woven, matt, canvas-like material and the blind box and housing should be integrated into the overall shopfront design, perhaps in the fascia or cornice.



Traditional Horizontal Blind

VENTILATION

• Shopfront Design Code 10

The requirements for ventilation should be considered as part of the shopfront design. Extractor fans facing the street will not normally be acceptable.

Areas of glass louvered windows are not in character with traditional shopfronts, and are also unlikely to be in character with a well designed modern shopfront. Alternative means of ventilation should therefore be considered, for

High Street -

Traditional vents below the fascia.
Also note the attractive corbel.



instance inward opening lights and cast iron vents above or below a transom have historically proved effective. Extractor fans and fans of any other sort, whether in the shopfront or main building are generally out of character with the building as well as being anti-social when located at pedestrian level and will be resisted.

SECURITY

• Shopfront Design Code 11

Security requirements must be considered in the design of all new or replacement shopfronts. Where security shutters are required they should be of a mesh design. Solid shutters and intrusive shutter box housings will not be allowed unless it is proven that they are not detrimental to the character of the area.

Shopfronts should be designed with security in mind. Reinforced stallrisers, smaller single expanses of glass with reinforced mullions and transoms and the use of laminated glass can all reduce the need for other measures. Where security is a particular problem, shutters may be considered necessary. However, a clear case must be made justifying any planning application; external shutters normally require planning permission whilst internal shutters do not. On a listed building both internal and external shutters require listed building consent.

Modern roller shutters of whatever design conceal the goods on display and because they create a dead frontage and fortress like atmosphere should be avoided. In addition, if someone does gain entry they are able to remain undisturbed inside the shop, out of public view. For similar reasons, although a traditional feature, removable, external solid timber shutters will not be encouraged except where historic accuracy is essential.



Modern Roller Shutters -

A shop with roller shutters offers a blank facade to the street.

Iceland, High Street -

A new shopfront with internal mesh security shutters.

Meshes and large slotted shutters on the inside of the window are successful for security purposes and cause less visual damage to the street scene. External lattice and slatted shutters and grilles can, subject to their detailed design, be more visually acceptable than those with a solid appearance.

Where they are essential, boxes and housing for any shutters, of what ever design, should be designed to minimise their impact on the shop front and must be integrated into the complete shopfront design. Ideally, such requirements should be taken into account in the design of any new shopfront and must be an integral part of the structure. When in use any shutter should be contained within the space framed by the fascia and pilasters. Guide channels and housing boxes should be hidden.

Any external security cameras should be integrated with the shopfront design and where possible hidden from view. If this is not possible they should be of the minimum size, carefully located, and, together with associated fixings/cabling, must be coloured appropriately.

FOOTWAY DISPLAYS

• Shopfront Design Code 12

The use of outdoor areas adjoining buildings with shopfronts for tables and chairs may be acceptable.



Browns, High Street -

A new shopfront allowing improved public access.

There are several parts of the Town Centre, such as the Quay, the High Street and Falkland Square, where there is a wide pavement in front of buildings. Sensitively designed shopfronts, based upon earlier guidance in this document, can be provided that open up to allow improved public access. Reducing the physical barrier between the interior of the shop and the public space outside is desirable to achieve a transitional and welcoming area. This can have benefits for the viability and vitality of the Borough.

Use of the street for pavement cafes requires planning permission and a Highway Licence in addition to the normal matter of ownership. Prior discussion with the Council is essential as there are a number of issues, such as public safety, disabled access, appropriate design/location of street furniture etc. that need to be resolved if this is to work well in practice.

Further advice on this matter is offered in the leaflet “Tables and Chairs in the Open Air” which is available from Planning Design and Control Services.

Shop Sign and Advertisement Design

The following design codes should be followed in order to achieve successful shop sign and advertisement design:

CORPORATE IMAGE

- **Advertisement Design Code 1**

Nationally known standard signs may require adapting to ensure that they are in character with the building and area.

The design and location of shop signs is important. Well designed signs coupled with pleasing shop fronts will add to the quality of a building and the area, whereas poor design will detract. Large national retailers should adapt their standard signs in accordance with this guidance and local circumstances if the Council considers them to be out of character.

FASCIA SIGNS

- **Advertisement Design Code 2**

There should be only one fascia sign over a shop window; this should be contained within the shopfront fascia.

Fascia signs should be located well below first floor window level. The depth of the fascia sign should respect the scale of the shopfront and, where possible, provide continuity with adjoining fascias. Only one fascia sign above a shop window is acceptable.

The fascia sign should state only the name or trade of the premises. Included should be the street number of the premises. Unnecessary duplication of a name on a single fascia should be avoided as should advertising of a particular brand name where it is only one of the products sold.

*Volcano, High Street -
An attractive and
innovative fascia sign.*



No individual shop fascia sign should unduly dominate the street scene. Signs should be contained within the shopfront fascia, which should not be horizontally sub-divided or added to in any way.

LETTERING

- **Advertisement Design Code 3**

Normally the lettering should be easily contained within the fascia. Where no fascia exists lettering can be applied either directly to the wall between ground and first floor level, or on ground floor windows.

Where a fascia exists, a ratio of 60% fascia height for lettering, with 20% spacing above and below is a reasonable guide. Length of wording should not be greater than 75% of the fascia length. An idea of these proportions is shown below.



On buildings where no fascia exists it may be appropriate for individual lettering to be applied directly to the wall between ground and first floor levels. Gilded, stove enamelled

or painted wooden letters are most suitable for this type of treatment in the Conservation Areas. Alternatively lettering on the ground floor windows may be a satisfactory compromise. The lettering should normally be coloured black or gold and should not be more than 100mm in height.

Lettering can evoke an image and provide great decorative interest. Considerable artistic effect can be provided if a competent signwriter and/or artist is employed. The choice of lettering can reflect the use and character of the shop and can also take into account the character or style of the building. Colours are important; gilding or strong tones on a dark background reflect light, and are clearly visible at night. Rich effects can be achieved by shading and blocking letters.

ILLUMINATION OF FASCIA SIGNS

- **Advertisement Design Code 4**

All illumination of fascias will be strictly controlled and preference will be given to the illumination of projecting signs. Where acceptable, lights to provide external illumination of fascias should be carefully sited to minimise their visual impact and should be designed to provide highlighting to the fascia only.

The illumination of fascias by any design of lighting can create visual clutter and is often undesirable. Generally illumination can take one of two forms:

Internal Illumination

Internally illuminated projecting box fascias will not be permitted on listed buildings, buildings of local importance or on buildings in Conservation Areas unless it can be demonstrated that the character and appearance of the building or conservation area is preserved or enhanced. In all cases concerning illuminated signs in a conservation area or on one of these buildings, prior discussion with the Planning Officers is essential.

Well designed internally illuminated fascias may be more generally acceptable elsewhere. However their size and projection should be kept to a minimum and they should be integrated with the construction of the shopfront. The use of large areas of bright illumination will be resisted. Illumination should be restricted to the lettering with the background in a dark, opaque, non-reflective material.

External Illumination

Where external illumination is proposed the number and projection of lamps should be kept to the minimum necessary and they should provide highlighting to the fascia only. Cornice details and former blind boxes housings can provide an opportunity for concealed lighting. Rows of swan neck lamps will rarely be acceptable.

PROJECTING SIGNS

- **Advertisement Design Code 5**

Projecting box signs will only be allowed where they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area. A simple projecting or hanging design of sign should be used.

Projecting signs form an extremely prominent element in any shopping street. These can take three general forms:

Projecting Signs

Projecting shop signs will normally be located at fascia level and should not impinge upon the first floor level. One projecting sign per shopfront is appropriate and generally the style of the projecting sign should complement the fascia.

On modern shopfronts or modern buildings, including in Conservation Areas, carefully designed projecting signs of the “finger” type in stainless steel, bronze, or dark stove enamelled metal may be acceptable.

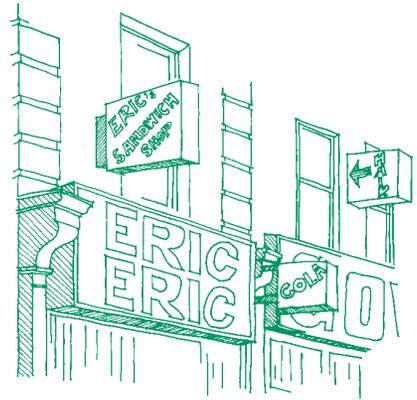
Limited illumination of projecting signs, either externally or for letters and logos only, may be acceptable subject to the detailed design.

“Box” Projecting Signs

Large modern projecting box signs, whether illuminated or not, are almost always out of character with the building and area. Given the availability of more acceptable alternatives they will rarely be acceptable and will only be allowed where it is demonstrated that they preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Hanging Signs

On older shopfronts or ones with traditional features, a hanging sign can be a very effective advertisement and will be more in keeping with the building. They can often be satisfactorily located above fascia level to advertise either the ground floor business or separate businesses on upper floors.



Hanging signs should generally be of a traditional, painted timber construction with appropriate lettering and design and hung on a wrought iron bracket. Original traditional brackets should be preserved. Lighting of hanging signs by small strip cowelled downlighters or small lamps, integrated with the bracket, can often be acceptable, including in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, providing that the character and appearance of the area and building is preserved or enhanced and the visual balance between sign and light source is satisfactory.

ADVERTISEMENTS ON UPPER FLOORS

- **Advertisement Design Code 6**

Lettering may be utilised on upper floor windows to advertise businesses on those floors.

- **Advertisement Design Code 7**

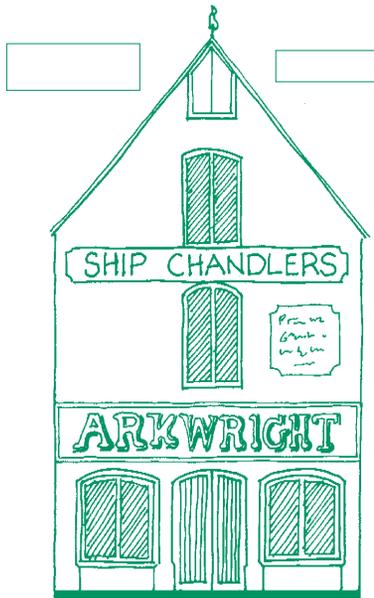
On the Quay, signs painted directly on buildings may be acceptable, subject to their detailed design.

Where businesses occupy premises above other commercial property, the use of lettering applied directly to the window will be permitted. The lettering should be coloured black or gold and should

not be more than 100mm in height. The wording should relate only to a separate business on that floor and not to the commercial use of the building at street level.

A special case exists on the Quay where warehouse buildings have traditionally displayed painted lettering signs at high level. Such

lettering, done sensitively in appropriate styles, size and colour, can add vitality to the quayside and reflect its maritime character. There may be similar cases in other parts of the Borough.



Signwriting above the bottom of first floor window level will require Advertisement Consent and if the building is listed, Listed Building Consent.

Consideration of advertisements for upper floors displayed at shopfront level will follow the guidance applied to other shop signs and advertisements.

As already indicated, a hanging sign can often be satisfactorily utilised to advertise businesses on upper floors.

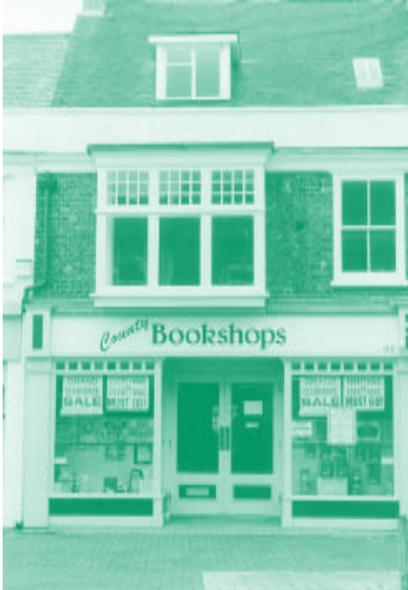
MATERIALS & COLOUR

• Advertisement Design Code 8

Dark background colours and non-glossy materials should generally be used for advertisements.

Dark background colours and non-glossy materials are usually preferred for the design of all signs. Rich, dark colours often look very good, as they leave the window displays to provide the highlight. Glossy plastic/perspex and large areas of highly polished metal finishes will rarely be acceptable on traditional buildings. Sand blasted/matt perspex/plastic and small areas of stainless steel might be acceptable on modern buildings in Conservation Areas. Elsewhere the combined visual impact of materials, background, colour, degree of illumination, sign size and location will be looked at critically by the Local Planning Authority

Examples of New Shopfronts in the Borough of Poole



County Bookshops, High Street -
This new shopfront has successfully reflected the character of the building above, through the subdivision of the glass above the transom.



Game, High Street -
The margin glazing bars of the original windows at first floor level have been reflected in this new shopfront. Although not traditional in design, the elements of the frame can still be seen.



Thorntons, High Street -
The projecting cornice on this shopfront, reflects that on the parent building. The shopfront has successfully reconciled a difficult relationship with the building to the left.

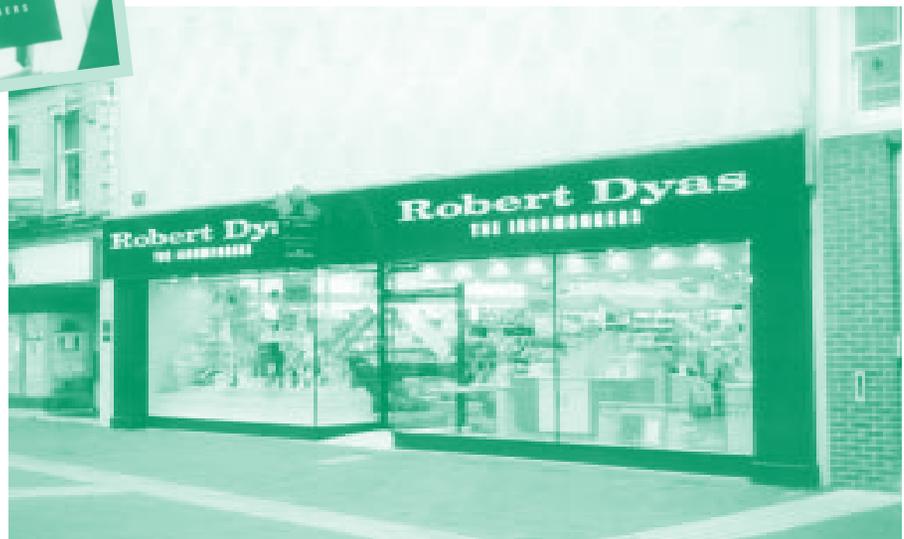


Yate's Wine Lodge, High Street -
This large shopfront successfully provides visual support for the building above, following the guidelines provided in this booklet.



Robert Dyas, High Street -

The simple design adopted for this new shopfront and hanging sign has recognised the 1960s facade above. The hanging sign adds interest and amusement in the streetscene.



Planning Permission and Advertisement Consent

The erection of a new shopfront or material alteration of an existing shopfront (including the installation of external shutters) requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended). The determination of planning applications will be in accordance with the Local Plan unless there are considerations which indicate otherwise. This is set out in Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Signs may form part of the shopfront and in certain circumstances they require a separate application for consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (as amended), for instance if they are above the bottom of any first floor windows, or if they are greater than specified sizes.

If the building is listed, alterations to the shop including repainting and advertisements are also likely to require separate Listed Building Consent. Further advice regarding Listed Buildings and applications for Listed Building Consent is available in the Council's publication 'Listed Buildings in Poole', available from Planning Design and Control Services at the address at the end of this booklet.

Planning applications for shopfronts and signs in Conservation Areas and all applications for Listed Building Consent should include fully detailed plans and full height front elevations of the property to a suitable scale, (not less than 1:20) showing adjoining buildings. Sectional drawings may also be needed, particularly for applications within Conservation Areas or for alterations or new shopfronts for Listed Buildings. These should be at a larger scale, often 1:5, 1:2 or even 1:1 as appropriate. Details must also be submitted of all materials and their colours proposed for the shopfront and shop signs.

CONSULTATION WITH THE PLANNING OFFICERS IS RECOMMENDED prior to any formal submission for planning permission.

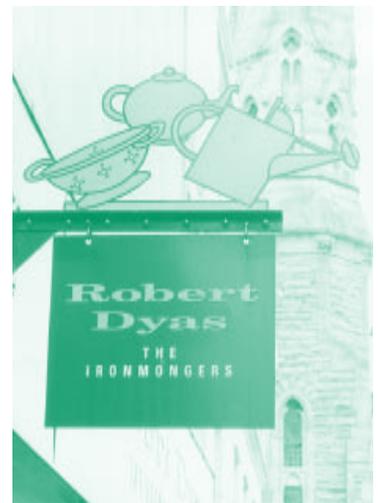


Above - The Works bookshop, High Street.

Right - Attractive hanging signs, High Street.

Front cover, top - Street scene, High Street.

Front cover, bottom - Hanging sign to Yates Wine Lodge, High Street.



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