

B L A C K P O O L C O U N C I L



# Supplementary Planning Guidance 5: External Shutters

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Benefits Administration



Blackpool Council  
BUILDING A BETTER COMMUNITY FOR ALL

This Supplementary Planning Guidance Note has been adopted by the Council and will be considered as a material planning consideration in determining relevant planning applications, supporting the policies set out in the Council's Local Plan.

The Guidance will be saved for a further 3 years after a new Blackpool Local Plan is adopted (expected to be in 2006).

The Guidance will in due course be reviewed under the new planning system (of a 'Local Development Framework' of planning documents supported by Supplementary Planning Documents).

## External Shutters

The gradual introduction of unsympathetic shutter installations has had a cumulative detrimental effect on a number of locations in Blackpool. This has become an issue nationally with a number of publications resulting, most significantly in Central Government Guidance in the form of Circular 5/94, "Planning Out Crime".

It is recognised that security is an increasing concern of shop owners. By discouraging unsympathetic development and promoting good design it is possible to achieve a safer and more welcoming environment, increasing public confidence and reducing the opportunity for vandalism as well as crime generally. Such changes will benefit the commercial sector, residents and visitors alike.

This revised Guidance supplements existing Policy E22 of the Blackpool Borough Local Plan and aims to provide practical advice to shopkeepers on the design of their external shutters, shopfronts, and on security matters generally. The Guidance has been adopted by the Council for development control purposes and the advice contained will constitute a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for external shutters.

If the security shutter is part of a new shopfront or refurbishment scheme, this Guidance should be read in conjunction with SPG Note 5, 'Shop Fronts & Signs'.

### Local Plan Policy

The main existing Local Plan policy relevant to external shutters is Policy E22: -

**E22 APPLICATIONS FOR EXTERNAL SHUTTERS ON COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND OTHER SIMILAR PREMISES WILL BE PERMITTED SUBJECT TO THEIR DESIGN BEING SYMPATHETIC TO THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING AND STREETSCENE. SHUTTERS AND GRILLES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED ON LISTED BUILDINGS IN THE MOST EXCEPTIONAL OF CIRCUMSTANCES.**

The policy aim is to maintain and improve the appearance and quality of the built environment. Policy E22 has the following objectives: -

- To inform developers and the public of the need for planning permission and the Council's approach to the installation of security shutters.
- To improve the character, appearance and security of commercial areas.
- To achieve a co-ordinated approach throughout the Borough.
- To assist applicants in identifying those designs likely to receive planning permission.

### **Policy Context**

The Town Centre as defined in the Blackpool Borough Local Plan and the secondary shopping streets are the areas of most concern. In these locations the need to achieve a balance between security and amenity is most important.

The environment created by extensive frontages of solid roller shutters gives the impression of a hostile and aggressive area thereby discouraging pedestrian use, whilst encouraging vandalism and property abuse. Paragraph 31 of Circular 5/94 comments that by deterring public use, benefits of passive surveillance are lost resulting in an inactive area more attractive to criminals who perceive that in such an area they are less likely to be detected.

For the same reasons there is also a need for control in other locations of the Borough including the Conservation Areas, the South Shore District Centre as defined in the Local Plan, and in local concentrations of commercial properties, for example local shopping parades.

Open shop frontages will be discouraged except in special circumstances such as on the Golden Mile and part of Lytham Road, but any security shutters installed should be of an acceptable colour and in accordance with this Guidance. Shutters and grilles will be permitted on Listed Buildings only in the most exceptional of circumstances.

### **The need for planning permission on properties other than dwellinghouses**

The installation of external shutters is likely to materially affect the external appearance of a building and thus constitute development requiring planning permission. The installation of internal shutters behind a window is unlikely to require planning permission.

Where the building affected is a Listed Building, any alteration that affects its special character also requires Listed Building Consent. Failure to obtain Listed Building Consent before work begins is an offence under Sections 5, 7 and 9 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A person who is guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable: (a) on summary to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding £20,000, or (b) on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years, or a fine, or both.

Methods of installing grilles and shutters are set out in BS.8229 Part 2 Section 4. Where the means of escape and layout are affected by the installation of shutters, the Fire Authority should also be consulted.

There will be instances where the installation of external shutters on dwellinghouses will require planning permission. It is advisable that the owner / occupier check the need for planning permission with the Planning Division prior to installation.

### **Shopfront Security Shutters & Their Impact on the Streetscene**

Security shutters have a significant impact in the streetscene. It is widely accepted that excessive

levels of security can have a detrimental effect on townscape and have an adverse effect on the overall perception of an area.

Highly visible or crime prevention measures such as security shutters can give the impression of an unsafe or high-risk area prone to crime. This is especially the case with solid security shutters, which are forbidding and unattractive. When they are closed, they present a blank frontage and can have a deadening effect on the character of the street. The overall effect is that customers and visitors avoid such centres; trade reduces; and no-go areas are created after dark. Areas no longer benefit from passive surveillance by shoppers and passers-by, thereby making shops more vulnerable to attack.

### Alternative Methods of Security

In order to minimise their impact on the building and the general character of the area, the Council encourages the use of security measures other than solid external shutters. Figure 1 illustrates how inappropriate security measures can have a detrimental impact on streets.

**Figure 1**

1. Oppressive, unattractive "solid" shutters
2. Obtrusive shutter boxes
3. Inappropriately positioned burglar alarm
4. No stallriser visible - poor interface with pavement



Security is best considered at the early stages of designing a new shopfront so that measures can be integrated into the overall scheme, rather than added on as an afterthought. It is advisable to review the entire security requirements of the premises before any single measure is adopted, including vulnerability to the rear and the roof. Once a development has been completed the main opportunity to incorporate crime prevention measures will have been lost.

There are a number of protective measures that can be taken which do not detrimentally affect the appearance of the property, which the Council recommends as alternatives to security shutters. These are set out below: -

- Strengthening doorways and their locks, hinges and securing devices. Consideration should be given to an unobtrusively positioned alarm system.
- Strengthened glass - the majority of display windows are clear 'plate' glass, easily broken in large areas, and are costly to replace and insure. Incidental damage and theft (and therefore cost) could be greatly reduced by the use of laminated glass or toughened glass.
- Smaller areas of glazing. By reducing the size of each glazed area (by incorporating additional glazing bars, which can be reinforced with metal 'T' sections), the glazing becomes less susceptible to incidental damage. That which is damaged becomes easier to replace.

The installation of subdivisions in a shopfront can also add character (as in traditional shopfronts).

- Bright interior lighting visible from outside the premises. Towns that encourage night lighting of the interior of the shop window display have streets that are more attractive to the public to window-shop out of hours, and benefit from passive surveillance.
- Internal stallrisers. These should be of an open grille type to enable clear views into the premises in evenings when lighting is left on.
- Solid Stallrisers. Reducing the amount of low-level glass is an effective deterrent to 'ram-raiding'. Stallrisers can be substantial structures, disguised externally, and help to provide a better interface between security shutters and the street surface.

This is not an exhaustive list. There are an increasing number of options available, a number of which fulfil the Council's development control requirements set out below, for example open shutters with polycarbonate infills.

### Development Control Requirements

External solid roller shutters are by far the worst option. They obscure architectural detail, remove the window element and display from the streetscene, invite graffiti, and can portray an overall impression of decline. For these reasons, solid metal shutters and perforated shutters (where the curved sections of the shutter are punched with thousands of minute holes) will not be permitted.

Proposals for external shutters in the Town Centre, South Shore District Centre, and Conservation Areas as defined in the Blackpool Borough Local Plan, and concentrations of commercial, industrial or other properties, should include the following elements: -

**Grille-type shutters**, of the open-mesh or 'lattice' type and with guides, in a colour to complement the rest of the shopfront, and where applicable securely fitted stables and good quality close shackle padlocks.

- Whilst better than solid shutters, when grilles are in place they can, to differing degrees, depending on the particular grille design, obscure and distort the appearance of the shopfront. The more subtle and delicate designs minimise this intrusion. Where used, a security grille should be of visual interest in its own right and relate to the rest of the shopfront (for example, the colour of the grille should complement that of any fascia or woodwork, etc).
- It may be necessary to incorporate "solid" sections in some grille-type shutters to strengthen the design; however, such sections will only be allowed below knee level and above head height. Ideally, grille sizes should be small enough to deflect missiles yet slim enough to maintain a clear view of the goods displayed.

**The shutter housing / roller mechanism** should be positioned behind the fascia where practicable or integrated within the overall shopfront design to make it as unobtrusive as possible. External shutter housings which protrude in front of the front of the plane of the shopfront will not be acceptable in most circumstances. Careful proportioning, colour-matching, suitable signage, design and/or similar measures will be material considerations as to suitability.

**External shutters** should not extend below window level and should leave the stallrisers visible. Shutters should not obscure design features of the property, for example pilasters, cornices or fascias.

### Doors

- (a) Recessed doors should be protected by storm doors, grilles or gates the full height and width of the entrance. Light can enhance security around the door.

- (b) Doors flush with the frontage can be secured by open grilles, which should conform to the requirements above.

All applications for shutters on commercial, industrial or other premises will be considered on their individual circumstances, having regard to the above criteria.

## Glossary of Terms

CLOSE SHACKLE PADLOCK	A padlock with a visible aperture to aid security.
COLOURING	
(i) Painted	This requires careful maintenance due to the effects of weathering and usage.
(ii) Powder coated	Applied prior to installation.
(iii) Plastic colour coated	Also applied before installation.
CONCERTINA DOORS	Give the appearance of a solid frontage when closed. When required doors can be unlocked and folded away to the side doors.
CORNICE	A moulding at the top of an outside wall, overhanging it to throw water away from the wall.
FASCIA	A wide board over a shopfront, usually carrying the shop name.
PILASTER	Column set in wall or window.
STALLRISER	The vertical surface from the pavement up to the stall board or window sill.
STAPLES	A metal loop for padlocking shutters, doors or gates.
STORM DOORS	An additional inner or outer door.





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