

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



Supplementary Planning Guidance 6: Shop Fronts and Signs

January 1995



2004-2005
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).

Shop Fronts and Signs

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Guidance is part of the Borough Council's efforts to make the resort, and in particular the town centre, more attractive.
- 1.2 The Guidance complements and incorporates elements of Supplementary SPG Note 5 concerning External Shutters, approved by the Planning Committee in June 1994.

2.0 The Need for Planning Permission

- 2.1 Most changes to shop fronts, including the installation of security shutters, require planning permission. Advertisement Consent is also normally required for illuminated signs and signs above ground floor level.
- 2.2 The provision of canopies or awnings over shop forecourts will usually need planning permission, and using the forecourt for sales or display of goods may also need permission.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 The policy aim is to maintain and improve the appearance and quality of the built environment.
- 3.2 This policy has the following objectives:-
 - (i) To inform developers and the public of the need for planning permission and the Council's approach to the provision of shop fronts and advertisements.
 - (ii) To improve the character, appearance and security of shops and shopping areas, particularly the town centre.
 - (iii) To ensure a co-ordinated approach throughout the Borough.
 - (iv) To assist applicants in identifying those designs likely to receive planning permission.

4.0 Policy Context

- 4.1 The town centre and South Shore District Centre, as defined in the Blackpool Borough Local Plan, and secondary shopping streets are the areas of main concern, although this Guidance applies throughout Blackpool.
- 4.2 Policies E14 and E21 of the Local Plan support this SPG, being concerned with the quality of the built environment.

5.0 The Shop and the Streetscene

- 5.1 The function of any shop front is to both identify the shop and to encourage the customer to enter and buy. However, a shop front is not an isolated object. It is part of the building to which it belongs and part of the streetscene. For good or for bad it contributes to the appearance of the street. So the design of the shop front matters to everyone who uses that street, as well as shop owners.
- 5.2 The size, proportion and style of traditional shop fronts and canopies often created a harmonious and interesting street. Materials and construction methods provided continuity, despite the gradual process of renewal. Although each shop front reflected the individuality of the retailer, it was designed as an integral part of the building and the street.
- 5.3 Over the past few years poorly designed standard shop fronts and signs have appeared, tending to make one town look very much like any other. The concerns are:-
- The intrusion of poorly designed new buildings, shop fronts and signs.
 - The application of unsuitable standard fascias and large plate glass windows into existing buildings, leaving the upper storeys cut off from the ground floor.
 - The expansion of business into buildings of different appearance.
 - The installation of solid roller shutters creating an uninteresting and even hostile environment. Further guidance on shutters is given in SPG Note 5, 'External Shutters'.
- 5.4 It is in the best interest of all traders to give more thought and show restraint in the design of their shops and in the way they advertise. When one owner over-advertises, others follow and in a relatively short space of time a street can be spoilt by poor design and excessive advertising. The standard of the goods and services which a shop offers are often judged by its outside appearance. A flashy, shoddy or dilapidated exterior is a poor introduction to a customer. In the same way, the appeal of any street as a shopping centre is greatly affected by the way its shops and buildings combine to create a general impression and atmosphere.

6.0 Poor Design

- 6.1 Both building and street can suffer from: -
- The intrusion of shop fronts out of scale with neighbours and the street.
 - The use of large plate glass windows, leaving the upper storeys visually isolated from the ground floor.
 - The removal of interesting and important architectural features, windows, cornices etc.
 - Unsuitable, over-large standard fascia signs and 'house styles' which disregard local conditions and the particular building.
 - The use of materials alien to the building and its surroundings.
 - Solid roller shutters with housing boxes placed on the front of fascias.
 - Lack of modelling (e.g. recessed doorways) leaving a bland, dull and flat appearance.
 - Linking adjoining buildings with unbroken fascias and shop fronts, spoiling the appearance of both buildings.

7.0 Good Design

- 7.1 Basic principles include:-
- Shop fronts in keeping with the scale, colour, style and materials of the buildings above.

- The retention of architectural features, such as original fascia, mouldings, glazing, doors, recesses and projections. Incorporation of such feature helps to make the new shop front stand out in the streetscene.
- Unobtrusive security features incorporated within the whole design.
- The recognition that individual buildings have different qualities and so should be treated individually. Corporate house styles should be adapted to fit different buildings.
- Canopies, where appropriate, in keeping with the design and scale of the whole building and the streetscene, as well as with any existing or proposed canopies, particularly on adjoining buildings. It is the view of the Council that canopies should be encouraged whenever possible.

8.0 Signs and Advertisements

- 8.1 If not given careful thought, signs and advertising can create a great deal of clutter. If handled carefully signs can be very attractive and add to the liveliness and interest of the street. One sign with a clearly stated message is often more effective than a number of different signs.
- 8.2 Fascia signs should state only the name and/or trade of the premises and not carry excessive advertisements, which add to confusion. All advertisements, including posters in shop windows, should be used sparingly.
 - 8.3 Large illuminated box fascias are seldom appropriate on older buildings and are especially inappropriate in Conservation Areas. Timber fascias with painted or applied lettering are preferred. In some cases, individually illuminated letters may be appropriate or other methods of illumination such as 'halo' or wash lighting.
- 8.4 Fascia boards should avoid the use of garish or reflective materials or the use of over-strong colours.
- 8.5 Corporate style lettering and logos may not always be appropriate. Consideration should be given to adapting them to the building or area in an imaginative and effective way.
- 8.6 Traditional hanging signs can enhance the character of some streets. Projecting signs should not generally be displayed above fascia level.

9.0 Development Control Policy

- 9.1 All planning applications for shop front and advertisement applications for the signs will be considered on their merits, but should have regard to the principles of good design set out above.
- 9.2 Proposals for shop fronts and signs which fail to have regard to this Guidance will not normally be acceptable.
- 9.3 In Conservation Areas the same principles apply, although there is likely to be stricter control because Local Authorities are required by law to have special regard to the preservation and enhancement of such areas.
- 9.4 If a shop is contained within a building which has been listed as being of architectural or historical interest, then Listed Building Consent as well as planning permission will be required (this also applies to internal work). The Local Planning Authority is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its features of special interest and is therefore likely to be strongly resistant to unsympathetic designs and shop front alterations and advertisements. It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a Listed Building.



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