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Shop front guidance

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Conservation area guidance note

Shopfronts and signage

This guidance note aims to summarise and explain Blackpool Council's local planning policies on shopfront design, signage and security in order to assist shop owners and shop fitters when new shop fronts and signage are being considered. It should be read in conjunction with Supplementary Planning Guidance 5: External Shutters, and Supplementary Guidance 6: Shop Fronts and Signs, available on the Council website.

1. Shopfronts

1.1 Planning permission is required for the external alteration of a shop front. Advertising consent is required for new, additional or replacement signage. If the shop is part of a listed building then listed building consent may also be required. The Council will seek designs which reflect the character of the Conservation Area and use traditional materials, unless it can be demonstrated that a contemporary alternative will maintain and preserve the character and appearance of the area and of the host building.

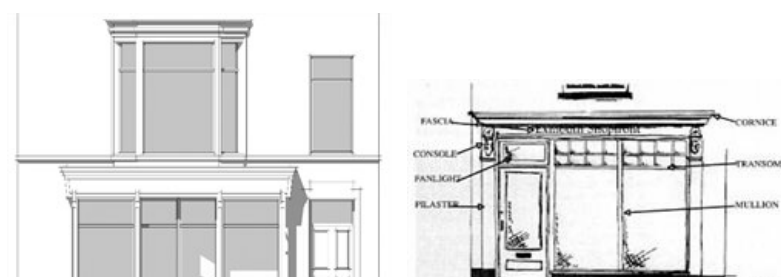
1.2 Grant-funded replacement shop front schemes will be required to meet criteria which conform strictly to the guidance on design, materials, signage and security measures for traditional shop front design.

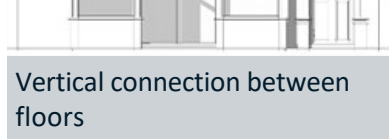
1.3 The provision of canopies or awnings over shop forecourts will usually need planning permission, and using the forecourt for sales or display of goods may also need permission.

1.4 Where a shop front occupies more than one building or unit, the division between the two should be identifiable and the fascia should maintain this separation.

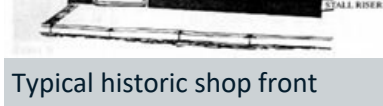
1.5 The most common problem in modern shop front design is the loss of the vertical architectural relationship between the ground and upper floors. This is traditionally set by the form and the arrangement of doors and windows.

1.6 The shop front window should not extend the full width of the building. A well-designed shop front can be described as a framed picture, with the subject being the goods on display, and the fascia, pilasters and stall risers seen as the frame. For example, this may be done by extending the main elevation material e.g. brick or stone, down to ground level at either side of the window. Pilasters could be used to provide vertical emphasis, perhaps in timber, tile or other traditional material. The stallriser could be executed in timber, stone, brick or tile. For grant funded schemes these elements should always be executed in timber.





Vertical connection between floors



Typical historic shop front

1.7 The design and proportions of the fascia should take into account the character, size and form of the building. It should not overlap the windows or sills above. To achieve the best visual proportions, the stallriser should not exceed 20% of the overall shopfront height.

1.8 The use of upvc for any element of a shop front will not be permitted in Conservation Areas, or on listed or locally listed buildings.

2. Signage

2.1 All advertisements are subject to standard conditions, requiring them to be safe, clean and tidy. Listed building consent will also be required where advertisements are proposed on such buildings.

2.2 In Conservation Areas painted timber fascias are more appropriate than acrylics and other modern materials. Lettering can also be applied in relief where appropriate.

2.3 Bulky, internally illuminated box signs constructed from non-traditional materials will not be permitted within Conservation Areas or on listed or locally listed buildings. The Council will consider applications for signage to be discreetly externally lit or for internally lit individually mounted letters standing proud of the fascia to provide a halo effect.

2.4 The size of lettering and logos should be in proportion to the detailing of the building. Lighting should be discreetly fixed and the minimum to allow the sign to be seen at night.

2.5 Whilst the Council accepts the value of corporate brand identity, companies may be required to modify the dimensions or arrangement of their signage to suit the character and proportions of the host building. It is usually possible to retain the graphic style, with careful use of materials, adaptation of size, and a flexible approach to location.

2.6 Where advertising consent is being sought for an existing shop front the opportunity should be taken to reduce the scale and improve the design where necessary in order to comply with the general design principles of this guidance. Previous poor design should not be seen as a precedent for proposed changes to signage.

2.7 Signs on timber or metal hanging boards of modest size and good proportions are a traditional feature of commercial streets. Hanging signs on wrought iron brackets are almost always preferable to solid projecting box signs, especially within Conservation Areas and on listed or locally listed buildings.



Traditionally designed shopfront

2.8 Projecting signs should normally be located at fascia height and preferably on the pilaster. Only one projecting sign per shop front elevation will be permitted. Corner premises will therefore be able to display two signs.

2.9 Internally illuminated projecting signs will not normally be allowed in Conservation Areas or on listed or locally listed buildings.

2.10 Coloured vinyl signage panels on windows are not acceptable on listed buildings, locally listed buildings and in Conservation Areas.

3. Security

3.1 External solid roller shutters require planning permission, but will not be permitted on listed buildings, locally listed buildings or in Conservation Areas, local or district shopping centres, the resort core, resort neighbourhoods, or the promenade frontages. They have a significant impact in the streetscene and perpetuate the perception of the presence of criminal activity in the area. They are not acceptable on traditional shop fronts in any form as they invariably require that fixings cut into mouldings and obscure them once in place.

3.2 The balance between aesthetic appearance and effective security is best achieved by incorporating security measures within the shop front design from the outset as opposed to 'bolting it on' retrospectively.

3.3 Small paned windows are less of a temptation to vandals than large sheet glass windows and the cost of repair is significantly less. The frames supporting the glazing also represent an additional obstacle to anyone trying to gain access.

3.4 High vision internal shutters will retain the character and appearance of a shop front and maintain a display of goods, whilst providing effective security. Planning consent will not be required for these devices, although Listed Building Consent would be required for buildings designated as such. Honeycomb or brick bond (tube and link) are acceptable.



Example of high vision internal shutters

3.5 A reduced value display together with an internal shutter presents a major deterrent to theft and damage whilst preserving the retail character of the shop when closed.

3.6 Where alarm boxes need to be fitted to the front of a shop it is preferable that they are placed above the fascia and any architectural detailing. If the box has to be placed lower it should avoid fixing to any architectural element.

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