



**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE 43
SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of this guide is to illustrate good practice in the renovation of existing shop frontages and in the design of replacement and new shop fronts. It is specifically aimed at shops in older traditional shopping streets in the inner urban areas. It is not the intention to lay down rigid rules and thereby stifle originality in design, but rather to establish general principles which, if followed, should result in well designed and attractive frontages.

2. SHOPS IN THE STREET SCENE

- 2.1. The shop frontage is the face which any shop presents to the world and a well designed front projects an image of quality which reflects well upon the goods and services provided inside.

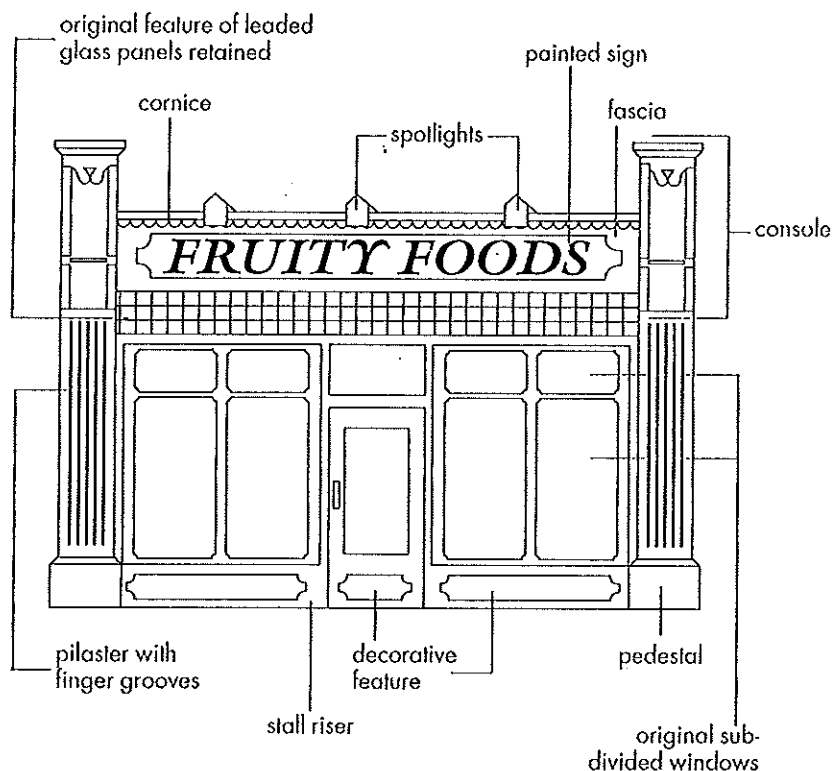


Traditional shop fronts

- 2.2. Bland shop fronts combine to produce bland towns which no one enjoys visiting, and it is important that the design of shop fronts make a positive contribution to the street as a whole.
- 2.3. The development of the concept of "corporate identity" and its insensitive application has played a significant part in eroding the rich variety of towns in Britain. Every effort should be made to tailor the use of company colours, logos and advertising in a manner which respects the building.

3. THE SHOP FRONT AS A FRAME

- 3.1. The form of shop fronts which are so familiar today was developed in the 18th and 19th Centuries according to classical principles of proportion. Narrow frontages and the use of tall, narrow sash windows produced a strong vertical emphasis.
- 3.2. The traditional shop front may be thought of as a picture frame which directs and retains the shoppers' attention onto the goods displayed within it. The frame consists of a number of elements, including stall riser and stall board, pilasters, fascia, window(s) and entrance.



Stall Risers and Stall Boards

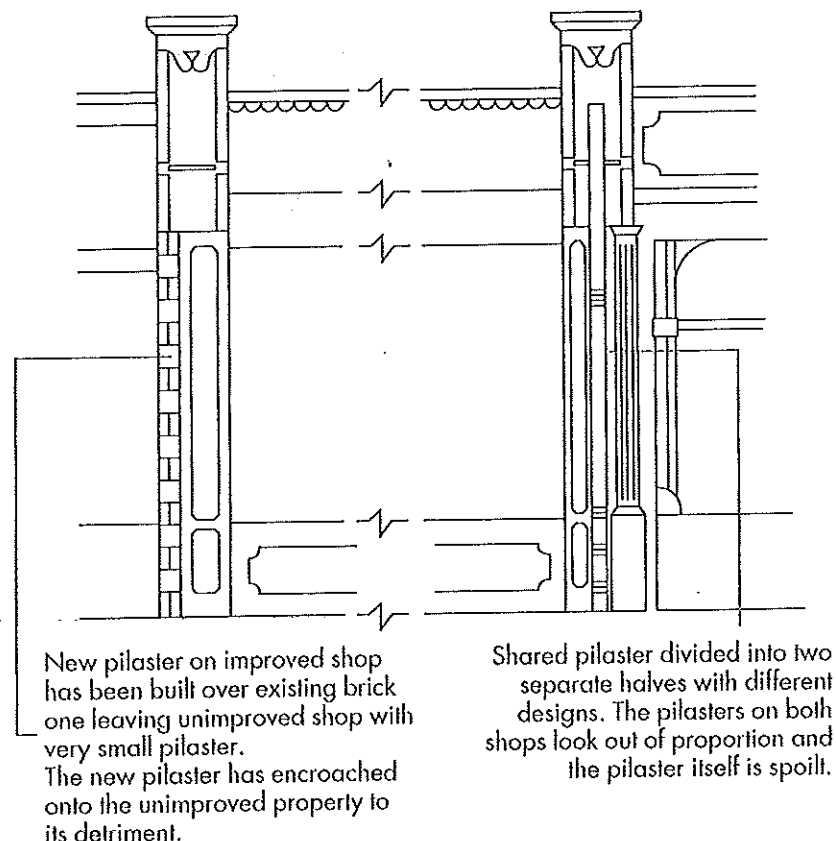
- 3.3. Stall risers and stall boards remain an important part of the frame, providing the building with a visual anchor to the ground. They should always be retained or replicated in existing shop fronts and original or traditional materials used.
- 3.4. Many modern shop fronts leave out the stall riser or make it too high and the result is often unfortunate.

Pilasters

- 3.5. Pilasters form the side of the frame. In older shop frontages they should be renovated wherever possible, with original features such as finger grooves, pedestals and so on, preserved, using traditional materials and finishes.

Fascia Boards

- 3.6. Fascia boards usually carry the name of the shop and are more easily seen if canted slightly downwards towards the viewer. In repairing and renovating existing frontages, the original wooden fascias should preferably be retained, along with any mouldings or console boxes. In many instances, deep and plain fascia boards have been placed over the original. These should be removed and the original board reinstated wherever possible.
- 3.7. Fascia boards, along with pilasters, should respect the original divisions between properties, even when businesses have expanded from their original building into a neighbouring property.
- 3.8. When replacing pilasters or fascias it is essential to discuss the proposals with the owner of the adjoining shops. Where pilasters and console boxes are shared, care should be taken to ensure that any renovation work complements the design of both shop fronts. Shops should not only be seen as individual frames but also as part of the shopping block in which they are located and the overall street scene.



- 3.9. Fascia boards normally carry the name of the shop and in many locations this will still look best in the form of painted lettering. Illumination, if necessary, should be provided with discreet spotlights positioned above the fascia board. Internally illuminated fascia boxes, individually illuminated letters, halo-lit perspex letters and fluorescent tube lighting should be avoided, and swan neck lights are not appropriate on historic buildings or in Conservation Areas.

Hanging Signs

- 3.10. Some shops have hanging signs or symbols as well as a fascia sign. Hanging signs which project from a shop can be an interesting feature. The sign board should be painted and should hang from a wrought iron bracket.

Windows

- 3.11. New windows should respect the original proportions and retain or replace glazing bars and other sub-divisions of the glazed area. Multi-barred windows and bow windows are normally inappropriate.

Doors

- 3.12. Doors which combine panels of wood and glass provide considerably more interest to an elevation than those which are almost completely glazed and should be used wherever possible.

Security Shutters

- 3.13. Adequate security is an important element in the design of a shop frontage. If external shutters are used it is essential that they are housed internally so they do not protrude from the shop front. They should also be coloured and of a "see-through" or "perforated" style. Under no circumstances should shutters be left in a raw, galvanised state or have prominent projecting shutter boxes. In sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas, internal lattice grills or toughened glass are more appropriate than any type of shutter.

Canopies and Blinds

- 3.14. Traditional retractable canopies, of brightly coloured materials, represent an attractive feature in the street scene. By contrast the modern plastic "Dutch" canopy is a poor quality element, alien to the buildings to which they are attached, and should be avoided.

Additional Features

- 3.15. An attractive feature of shop fronts can be the use of the pavement area in front of the shop to display goods. This can help to brighten up the street scene and act as an extension to the shop. However, the type of display is only suitable where the forecourt is wide and does not hinder pedestrian movement. It is essential that the Borough Engineers Department is consulted before any goods are displayed in this way.

4. ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

- 4.1. When installing new shop fronts, the needs of disabled and elderly people and those with young children must be taken into consideration. Wherever possible, steps should be converted into ramps or if this is not achievable, reduced in height. Wide doorways should be provided. Overall, the general level of access provision should not be reduced by the new shop front proposed.

5. PLANNING PERMISSION

- 5.1. New shop fronts usually require both planning permission and building regulation approval. The Council is happy to discuss the planning, design and access aspects of any proposals for the renovation or replacement of a shop front prior to the submission of an application for planning permission and/or Listed Building consent.