

**SHOPFRONT
and SIGNS
DESIGN GUIDE
for
EAST HAMPSHIRE**

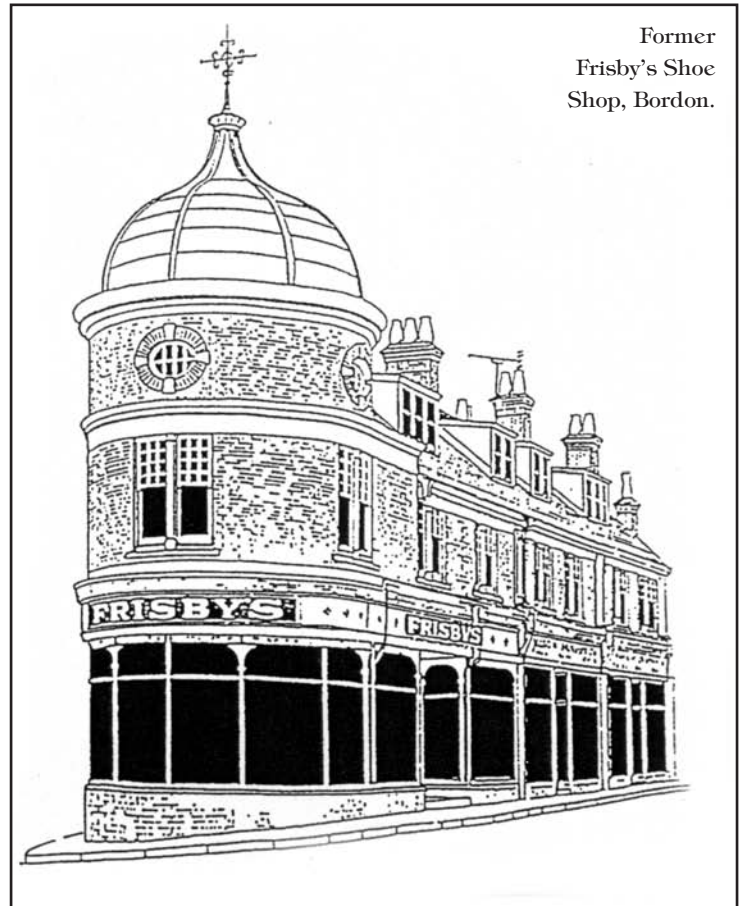
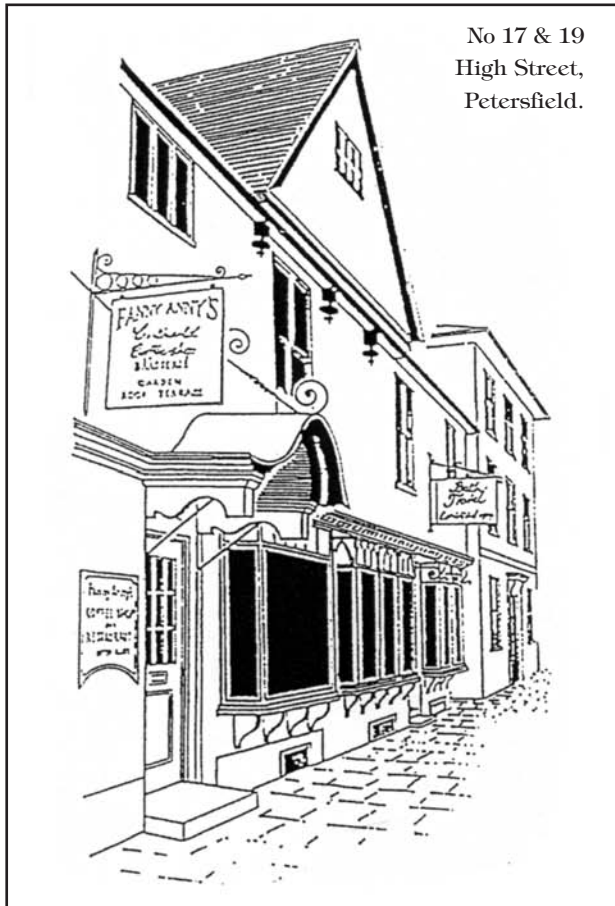


INTRODUCTION

The District Council is strongly committed to maintaining and improving the shopping centres in East Hampshire District. Shopfronts have a key role to play in creating an attractive area in which to shop, as well as serving as the main advertisement for the businesses within. A well designed shopfront is a valuable asset and a good advertisement.

The Design Guide will be used as supplementary planning guidance by the District Council when discussing with businesses their plans for shopfronts or improvements to existing ones and replaces the E.H.D.C. Shopfronts and Advertisements Guide of October, 1986.

Historic and distinctive shopfronts in the District.



WHEN IS PLANNING PERMISSION REQUIRED?

Planning permission is needed for any material change in the external appearance of a shop. This includes altering the glazing, changing facing materials, installing blinds or shutters or enlarging the size of a fascia. In assessing planning applications for a new shopfront or alterations to existing the Planning Authority will normally expect to achieve a positive contribution to the street scene. Designs should reflect the character of the building.

Conservation Area Consent is required for the proposed complete or substantial demolition of any building in a Conservation Area. This includes the removal of a shopfront or of any feature that gives character to a building.

A separate procedure applies to the display of advertisements on shopfronts.

Listed Building Consent is required for any material alteration that affects the character of a Listed Building. This can include such details as re-painting a shopfront in a different colour, installing a security alarm or extractor fan, altering the shop interior, or installing blinds, shutters and advertisements.

EXISTING SHOPFRONTS

Photographic records and illustrations of historic streets show the diversity and exuberance of traditional shopfront design. Many shopping streets have evolved over hundreds of years and have experienced many changes. Any material changes should be carefully considered to maintain or improve the quality and character of the building itself and its streetscape.



Overscaled and incongruous shopfronts which harm the character and appearance of the buildings and the Conservation Area.

The original character of our town and village centres can be significantly diminished by the widespread replacement of traditional shopfronts by poor quality modern shopfronts with internally illuminated plastic box fascia signs overhead, usually emblazoned with large crude lettering for optimum impact.

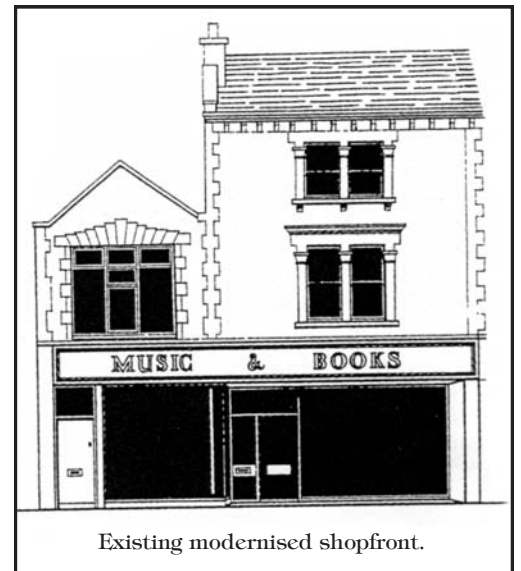
Few traditional shopfronts now survive in their original condition; many have been “modernised” or significantly altered out of character. Occasionally when the shop size increased to occupy the adjacent building the original separate shopfronts were replaced by a single fully glazed frontage with a deep shopsign fascia over extending continuously the full length of the frontage. This effect not only dramatically disrupts the character and scale of the buildings but also the vertical rhythm of the streetscape.

In Conservation Areas it is the policy of the Council to seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the streetscape. Accordingly consent will not normally be granted for the demolition of traditional shopfronts. Owners normally will be encouraged to carefully repair any disfigured element of historic or architectural interest, and to undertake the proper reinstatement of the complete original shopfront.



Continuous horizontal fascia conflicts with character of building and its streetscape.

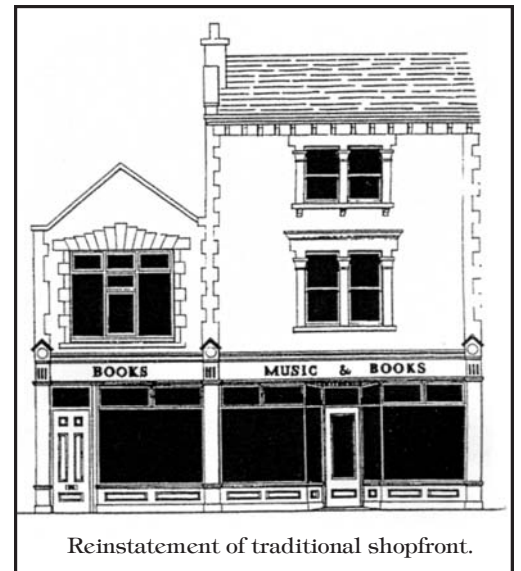
The retention of existing shopfronts of an appropriate architectural style is important because they form part of the original building and are sympathetic to its scale, proportion and rhythm. It is usually a less costly solution to refurbish what is already there. Traditional items, including architectural detailing such as doors, door handles, knockers and letter boxes, should be preserved.



Existing modernised shopfront.



Reinstatement of traditional shopfronts to enhance building and street.

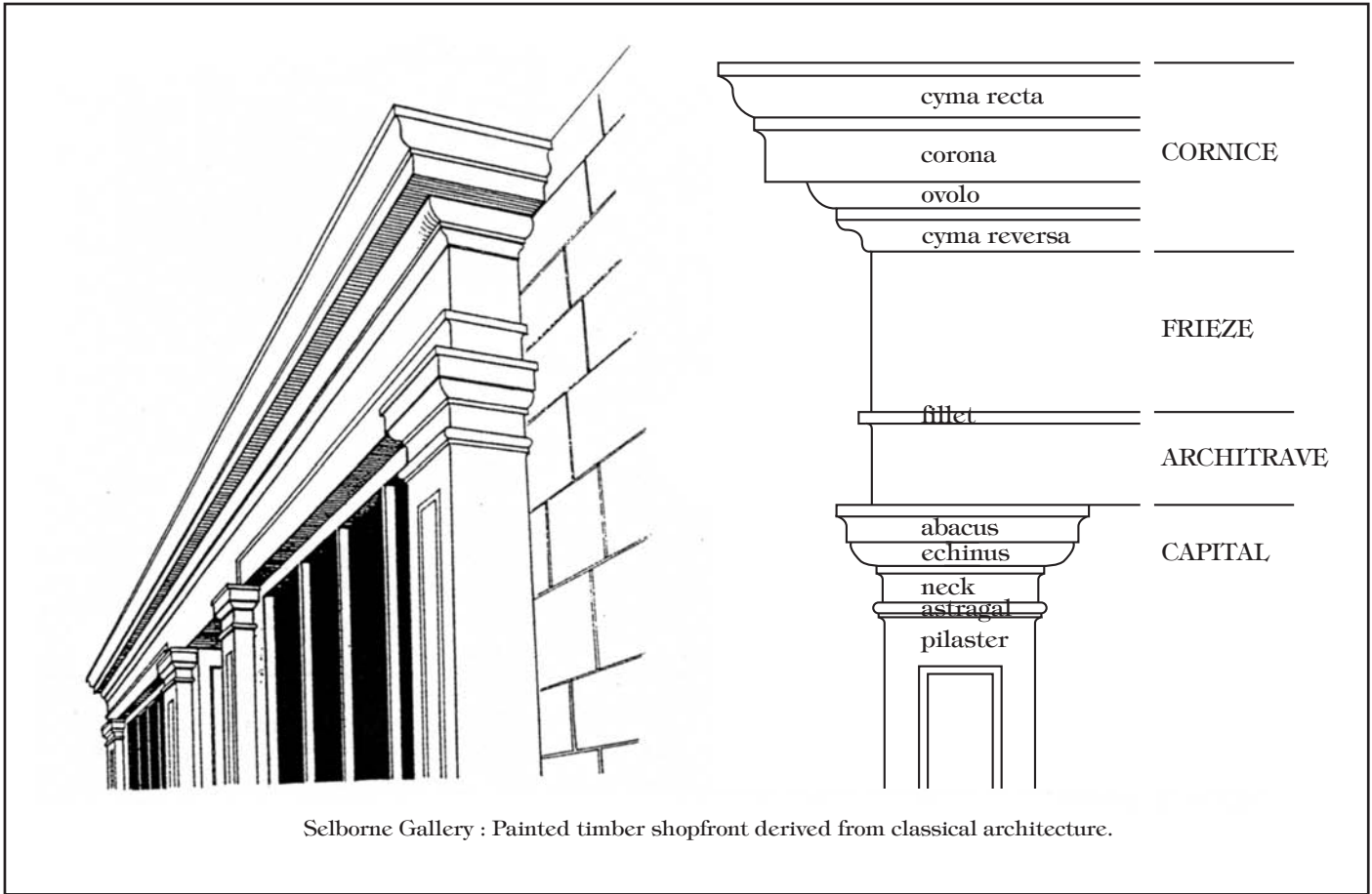


Reinstatement of traditional shopfront.

Any reinstatement of traditional shopfronts should be carefully considered and should complement existing features such as pilasters, consoles, cornices and fascia boards. They should be of an accurate design and appropriate style that does not destroy or conceal any of the original features, or detrimentally affect the appearance of upper floors or adjoining buildings.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GOOD TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONT DESIGN

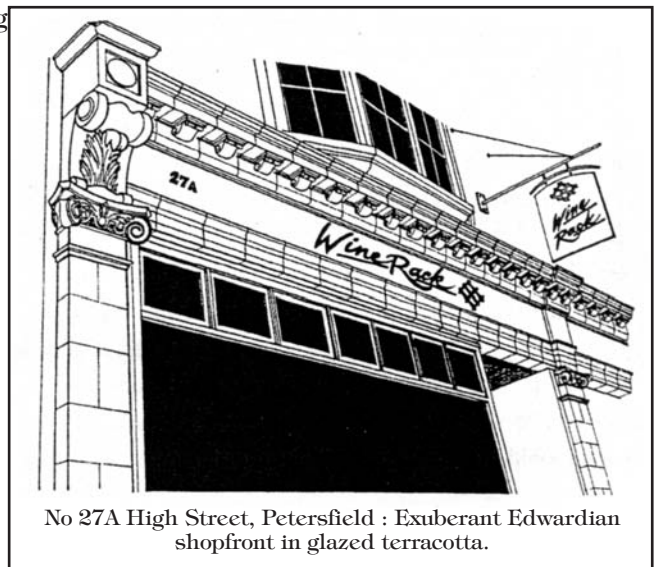
Traditional shopfronts derived from the principles of classical design are notably successful in achieving a satisfactory relationship between the shopfront and the building as a whole. These principles still hold good.

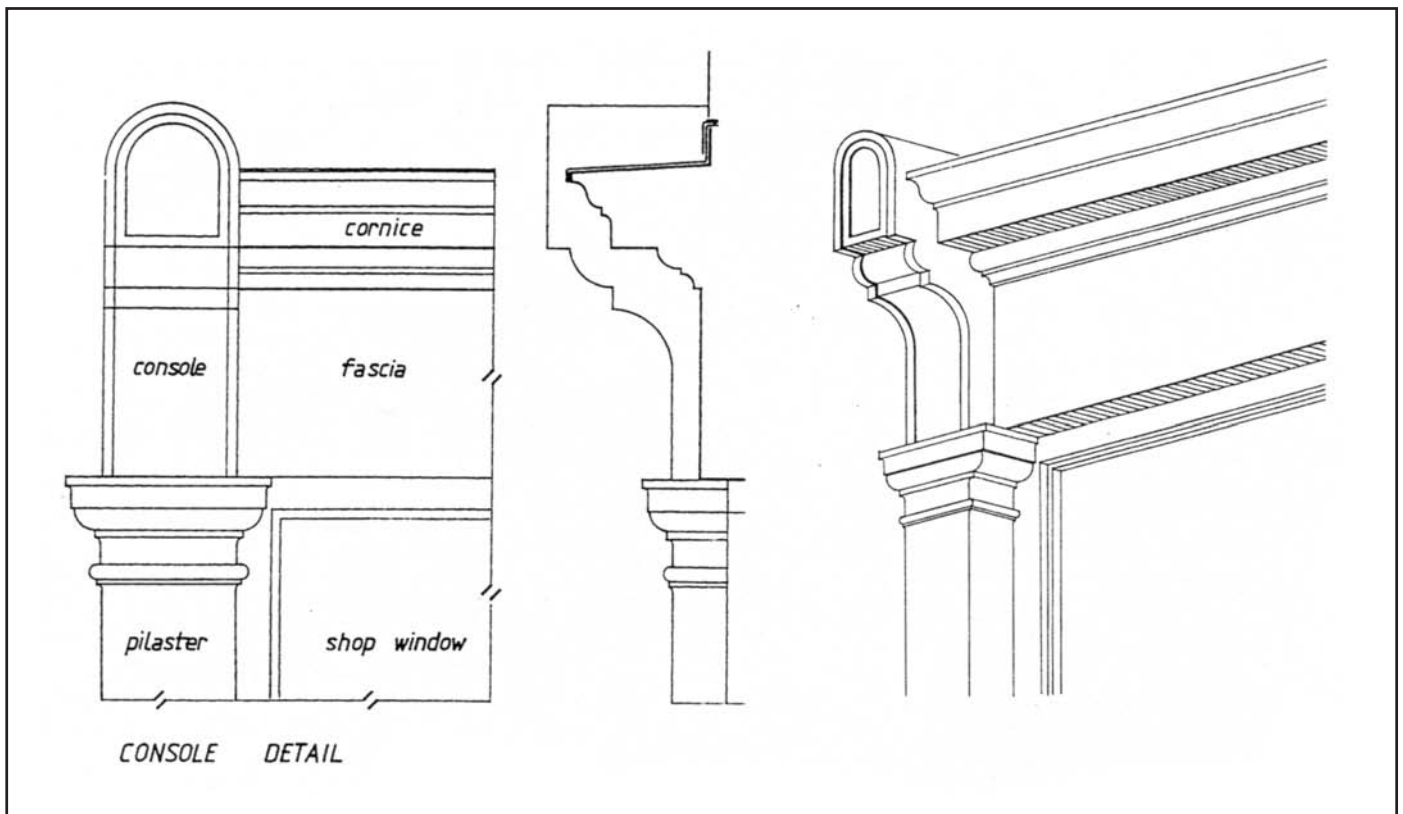


A traditional shopfront is made up of a number of elements. These are important to the proportion, scale, form and style of the shopfront. They constitute the surround or framework of the shopfront and, within this, there is scope for a wide range of designs. Some general principles are outlined below:-

SHOPFRONT ELEMENTS

Fascias - The traditional fascia would normally have a projecting moulded cornice above it. This is both decorative and functional, as it crowns the shopfront and gives weather protection by throwing water clear of the shopfront and preventing rot. In appropriate circumstances, traditional roller blinds can be incorporated within the cornice. The projecting cornice should be weathered with a properly detailed lead sheeting. Fascias should not override or dominate the upper facade, obscure windows, ignore party wall divisions or architectural changes of wall plane. They should be in proportion to the whole shopfront and not encroach on to the upper floor (above the level of the window cill), or extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings. The fascia is a space for displaying the name of the shop and should not normally exceed 400mm in depth. Each shopfront should clearly display its street number.





Pilasters - These frame and define the width and vertical strength of the shopfront and separate it from its neighbour. They also visually support the fascia and are often integral to it.

Consoles - These crown the pilasters and define the width of the fascia. They are a key element in maintaining the predominant vertical rhythm of a traditional streetscape.

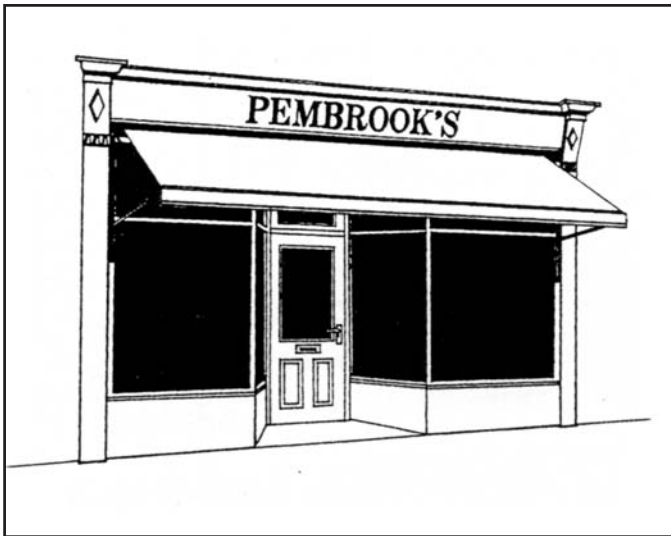
Stallrisers - These should be retained wherever possible. They provide protection at ground level and give a solid visual base to the shopfront. Where stallrisers have been removed, their re-installment is encouraged. Stallrisers should normally be at least 500mm high, be panelled, rendered, or finished in brick and provide a cill for glazing.

Windows - Large expanses of glass should be avoided as they are usually out of scale with the building; they are also expensive to replace. The size and proportions of windows will need to relate positively to the design of the building as a whole. Large areas of advertisement posters applied directly onto display windows should be avoided.

Doors/Access - These should be in keeping with the other elements of the shopfront. They can be flush or recessed. Recessed shopfronts are preferred as they introduce visual interest and act as an invitation to the customer. If the doors are recessed, their returns should match the stallriser and normally be recessed by at least 800mm.

Materials - Examples of a diverse range of materials used in traditional shopfronts include Portland Stone, marble, granite, terra-cotta, bronze framing, painted timber framing, plate or curved glass and cast iron grilles. Timber was the standard shopfront material, it can be worked to any profile, it is durable and can be repainted at minimum cost if one wants to change or freshen up its appearance. The use of traditional materials such as painted timber is encouraged wherever appropriate. The use of acrylic sheeting, perspex, plastic, standard natural finish aluminium and unpainted softwoods should be avoided. Colours should be traditional and appropriate to the building and streetscene. Garish or lurid colours should be avoided.

A Traditional Shopfront and its Surround

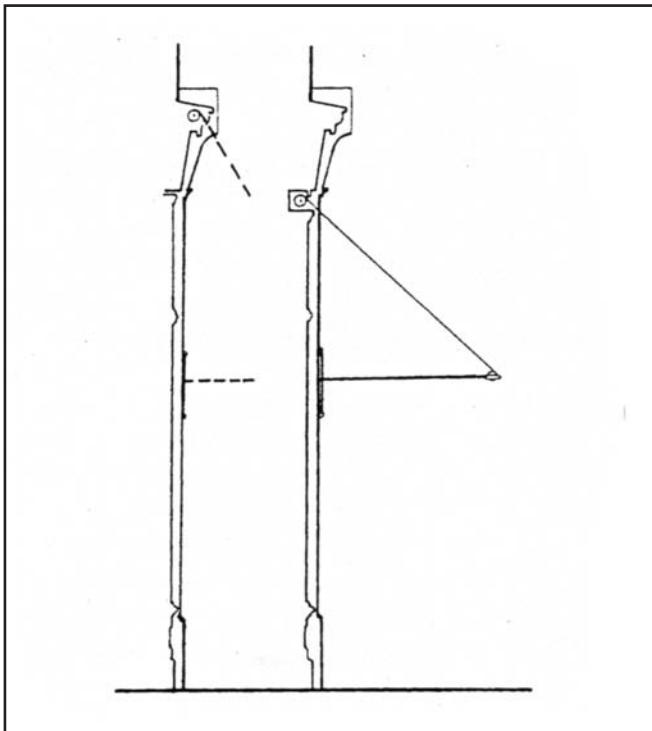


Traditional retractable awning



Dutch type fixed awning

Canopies and Blinds - Blinds protect goods from sunlight but they should be retractable so that they may be pulled down only when required and so that the fascia is not permanently obscured. Normally there is no need for them on north-facing elevations. If traditional blinds are used, thought must be given to how the blind box can best be integrated into the shopfront design - the traditional solution was either to incorporate it within the projecting fascia cornice or in a blind box between the fascia and the display window. Fixed Dutch blinds or 'balloon' canopies are usually added as a means of increasing advertising space. They obscure the fascia, and introduce a prominent shape which is out of character with the streetscape in Conservation Areas. The use of plastic 'wet-look' stretch fabric is strongly discouraged. Separate consent under the Advertisements Regulations may be required for fixed blinds with Advertisements.

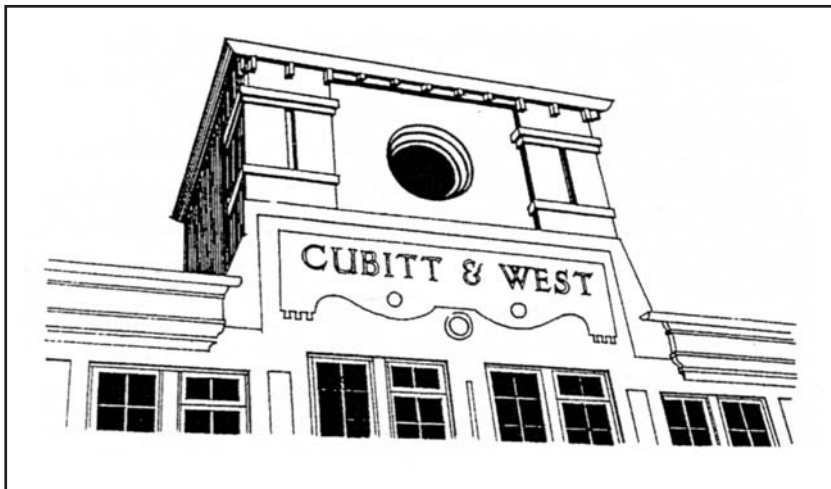
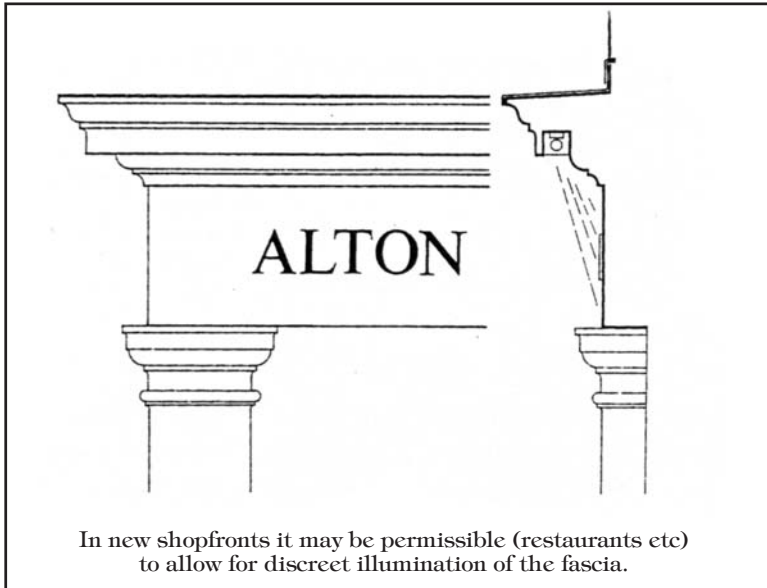


Awning blind box locations

Traditional retractable awnings, located either within the cornice or below the fascia are designed to be intergrated with the architectural framework of the shopfront. Contemporary style retractable awnings have extendable arms, cranked or electrically operated, with adjustable angles of pitch from their wall mountings. It is important that the design of any awning blind box be treated as an integral element of the shopfront framework - not as an applied afterthought. The bottom of new awnings projecting over the public pavement must be a minimum of 2.4m above pavement level and 0.5m back from face of kerb.

Illumination - Shop window display lighting contributes towards a lively and safe night-time environment. The illumination of shopfronts, however, where acceptable, should be discreetly located on the building. Internally illuminated box-fascias, individually illuminated letters and halo-lit perspex letters are not acceptable in Conservation Areas. It will not generally be appropriate to illuminate projecting or hanging signs externally unless they belong to public houses, restaurants or other late-night opening premises.

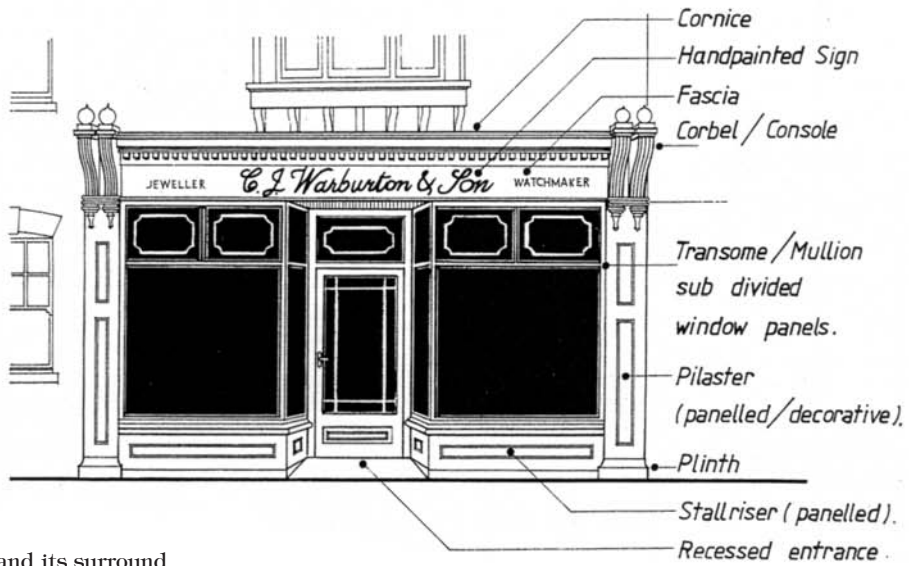
Separate planning procedures apply to obtaining consent to display advertisements.



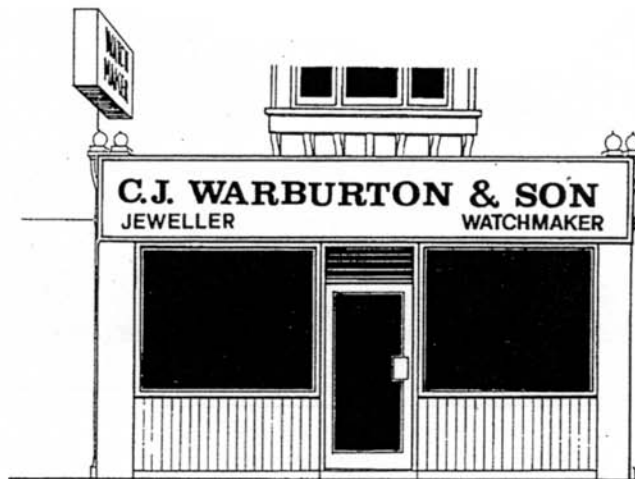
Projecting Signs - Traditional signs hung from a decorative wrought iron bracket fixed to the building facade at first floor window level are encouraged where they enhance the character and overall appearance of the building. The design of traditional hanging signs is often highly evocative and of great decorative interest. Hanging symbols denoting the trade carried on in the premises may be considered as an alternative to a hanging board. Projecting illuminated box signs and signs forming a projecting part of a fascia will not be acceptable in Conservation Areas. Separate planning procedures apply to obtaining consent to display Advertisements.

Lettering - The choice of lettering and illustration can reflect the use and character of the shop. Considerable artistic effect can be created if a competent signwriter is employed. 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 blacking of letters.

Where there is no fascia individual letters may be attached directly to the building, simple solid shapes will normally be suitable and the traditional gilded lettering with a half-round section is particularly appropriate for pubs and hotels.



A Traditional Shopfront and its surround



Unsympathetic Alterations to a Traditional Shopfront

Projecting illuminated box sign.

Oversized internally lit bulky plastic fascia obscuring original details is unsympathetic to character of building.

Aluminium & glass louvres. Out of scale blank windows.

Pilaster details obscured.

Stallriser out of proportion and inappropriate materials.

Door design out of character with building, door threshold inaccessible to the disabled.

Unsympathetic alterations to a traditional shopfront



Bold form and intricate detail to consoles provide so much vitality and interest

NEW SHOPFRONTS

East Hampshire District Council expects a high level of design skill from architects who design new shopfronts, especially in Conservation Areas. Without favouring any particular contemporary style, new shopfronts of an imaginative and creative design are encouraged which may be complementary in proportion, scale, quality of materials and detailing to the building itself. A skillfully designed architectural framework clearly defining the shopfront itself and articulating all its constituent elements is recommended. Well designed new shopfronts in context, as well as the sensitive restoration of old ones enrich the vitality and varied character of our towns and villages and reinforce their historical continuity.



No 19 High Street, Alton -

This new shopfront relates positively to the scale, character and appearance of the eighteenth century building.

The question of reproduction shopfronts is a somewhat controversial one: their unchecked effect can create an undesirable atmosphere of fake history, of theatrical stage sets. Ideally reproduction or replica shopfronts should only be sparingly used, and in their correct architectural and historical context, relating directly to the building's structure and design of the whole facade. A skilfully crafted replica can enhance the building itself and its streetscape setting, if inserted into a barren void where the original shopfront has been gutted out. Scrupulous attention should be devoted to ensure its accuracy of design, proportion, scale and detail. Poor quality pastiche reproduction shopfronts, particularly if derived from a fanciful medley of diluted 'period' details, should be avoided.

Standard and corporate shopfronts should be avoided because generally they have no regard for individual buildings; they detract from the style and character of the premises and their surroundings, and may adversely affect the distinctive character of the town or village in which they are placed. Adapting corporate images in a modest manner may be more appropriate, particularly in the District's more sensitive areas, Conservation Areas.

Where the proposal involves more than one individual building or facade shopfronts should be individually designed for each unit or facade.

Every shopfront application will be assessed on its merits and in the context of its setting. Application drawings should show the complete building facade and part of the adjoining frontages in order to show the overall impact of the shopfront. Permission will not be granted for incongruous or unsympathetic designs on the grounds that there are still many that are as bad or worse in the vicinity. The process of enhancement is incremental, and has inevitably to rely largely upon supplanting visually discordant elements as and when the need for replacement arises.

ACCESS FOR THE DISABLED

New shopfronts should accommodate the needs of disabled people. As a general principle, steps should be avoided and doors should be capable of being opened by people in wheelchairs. The clear opening width of the shop door should be at least 850mm.

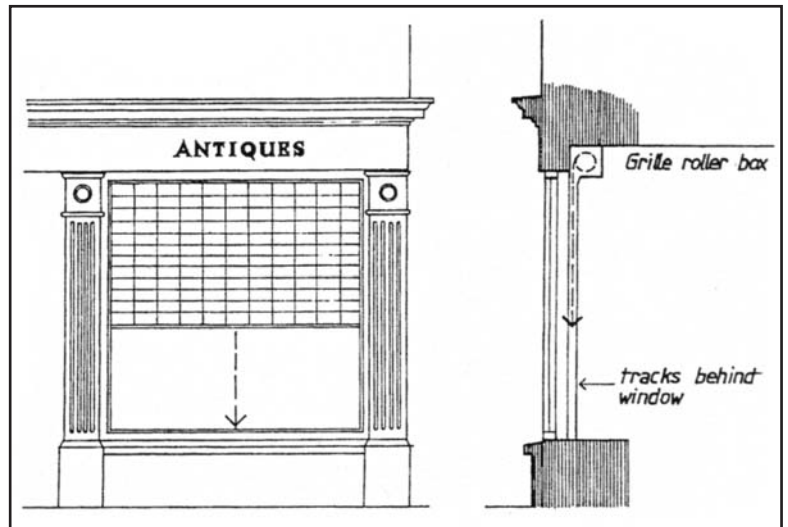
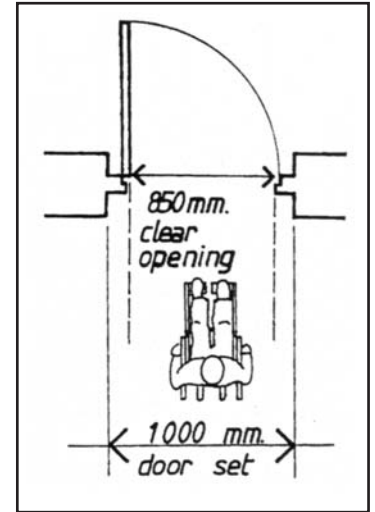
With listed buildings and very sensitive historic areas, the needs of the disabled people should be taken into account as far as possible, commensurate with the need to preserve the special character of the building or area.

SECURITY MEASURES FOR SHOPFRONTS

Increasing levels of vandalism and crime have led many retailers to consider security measures, particularly the installation of security shutters to protect properties. Unfortunately, the attachment to a shop front of external grilles and shutters, together with their associated guide-rails and boxes, can spoil its appearance and adversely affect the street scene. Moreover, a concentration of external roller shutters, in prominent locations, can result in a bleak, depressing frontage which magnifies the problem. Where such a situation arises, shoppers are unlikely to “window shop”, which not only reduces the amount of natural surveillance in the evenings and weekends, but also ultimately reduces trade to the individual retailer and other traders in the locality.

The Council accordingly will not normally approve proposals for installing external roller shutters in Conservation Areas, but recommend the following security measures;

- a) *Consideration should be given to the installation of five lever deadlocks to British Standards to all doors. Electrical Alarm Systems can also be fitted.*
- b) *A number of different types of strengthened glass are now available, with laminated glass having the most potential. It is much harder to penetrate than conventional glass as on impact the glass breaks, but pieces remain adhered to a plastic membrane. Laminated glass is slightly dearer but has the advantage of absorbing a high proportion of ultra-violet rays, which can damage goods on display.*
- c) *Reducing the size of the glazed panels can also have a positive effect. Adding glazing bars gives the glass additional strength, presents less of an attraction to the vandal, and if damage is sustained, is cheaper and easier to repair.*
- d) *A number of retail outlets have internally illuminated display windows and doorways. This can be achieved with little initial and running costs, but can deter theft and vandalism. Moreover, illuminating a display can attract window shoppers and so increase trade and natural surveillance.*
- e) *Grilles can be fitted inside windows behind the glass, which allow a window display to be maintained. The roller-box is concealed behind the fascia above the window level, so nothing is visible when the grille is retracted. Internal grilles combined with internal illumination allow window shopping after trading hours, and help maintain a lively street scene.*
- f) *The use of stallrisers backed up with a solid wall construction can be effective deterrent against ram-raiders.*



Security grill set behind a shop window

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

On the 13th December 1995 the Development Policy Committee resolved that the Design Guide for Shopfronts be approved for consultation with local business and the shopfronts industry and subject to their comments, be adopted and used as supplementary guidance to the design Polices of the EHDLP and the EHDLP: First Review. Further to consultation of the above Petersfield Town Council, Alton Town Council, District amenity societies, architects and specialist shopfront designers were also invited to comment on the Consultation Draft.

The Design Guide has subsequently modified, clarified and additional illustrations included to supplement the text in response to consultation comments.

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