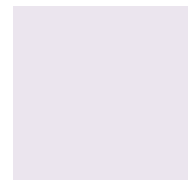


SHOP FRONTS AND SECURITY SHUTTERS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
DOCUMENT

DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION



MARCH 2012



| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| 2 Purpose | 3 |
| 3 What consents are needed? | 5 |
| 4 Shopfronts | 7 |
| Shopfronts - principles of good design | 7 |
| Detailed design guidance | 7 |
| Pilasters | 8 |
| Fascias and cornice | 8 |
| Stallrisers | 9 |
| Doorways | 9 |
| Glazing | 9 |
| Use of third dimension | 9 |
| Lettering and signage | 10 |
| Blinds and canopies | 10 |
| Illumination | 10 |
| 5 Security Shutters and Grilles | 11 |
| Introduction | 11 |
| Will planning permission be required? | 11 |
| Security issues | 11 |
| Planning considerations - general | 12 |
| Information requirements | 12 |
| Planning considerations - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings | 12 |
| Internal shutters and grilles | 13 |
| Recessed shopfronts and doorways | 13 |



contents

1 Introduction

The Council is committed to promoting the vitality and viability of the borough's town centres and other retail areas, with a wide range and choice of shops, activities and facilities. Crucial to the success of this is ensuring a safe and attractive environment that enhances the quality of life of residents and visitors and attracts investment. The Council recognises that shopfronts and associated displays can add to the richness and character of retail centres but can be vulnerable to vandalism and theft. Measures to make retail centres more secure, particularly at night, can however have a detrimental impact on the character of an area.

The advice in this document is intended to strike a balance between security and visual impact. In this document we set out clear guidance in respect of the design of shop fronts and associated advertisements and security measures, both in terms of outlining good practice and setting out what is and isn't likely to receive planning permission and listed building consent.

It is not the intention to be overly prescriptive, rather it is hoped that guiding principles and possible solutions can be used to treat certain design problems which will allow the developer, architect or shopfitter flexibility whilst respecting the building frontage and the street scene.

In cases where due account has not been taken of these guidelines and other relevant Council policies, or where applications are not submitted with sufficient information to properly assess the proposal, planning permission and other consents such as advertisement consent and listed building consent is likely to be refused.

Street-level frontages to restaurants, banks, offices and other commercial uses are included here within the general definition of 'shopfront'.

This guidance expands upon and adds detail to the following policies of the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan:

- Policy BE/2 (Design Criteria for New Development);
- Policy BE/4 (Advertising signs on buildings or business premises);
- Policy BE/5 (Shop Fronts);
- Policy BE/14 (Alterations and extensions to listed buildings); and
- Policy BE/17 (New Development Affecting Conservation Areas).

Upon adoption of the Core Strategy, the guidance will relate to:

- Policy E1 - Establishing thriving town, district and local centres; and
- Policies P1 to P3 – Improving Design, Image and Quality of Place.

This guidance also relates to the principles outlined in the Council's Oldham and Rochdale Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document.

This guidance also takes into account national policy and guidance contained within the following documents:

- Planning Policy Statement 4: Planning and Sustainable Economic Growth;
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment;
- Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth; and
- National Planning Policy Framework (consultation draft)

2 Purpose

This supplementary planning document is intended to provide clear and concise guidance to businesses, developers and planning officers in terms of shop front design, associated advertisements and security measures. It is an updated version of the 'Design Guidelines for Shop Fronts and Associated Advertisements Supplementary Planning Guidance' produced in February 1995.

3 What consents are needed?

In most cases shopfronts and associated advertisements require the permission of the Council as Local Planning Authority. Whether planning permission is required for a new shop front or alterations to existing shop fronts depends on whether the works are considered to comprise 'development' under Section 55 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The rules governing whether consent is required to display advertisements are contained in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

These rules are complex. If you have any doubt about whether or not you may require planning permission and/or advertisement consent please contact the Council for further advice. Further, if the building in question is listed, you will need Listed Building Consent. Below are some general points for assistance:

- All new shopfronts require planning permission.
- All external shutters and grilles require planning permission. (This may also include any replacement shutters or grilles)
- Alterations or extensions to existing shopfronts will also normally require planning permission if, in the view of the Local Planning Authority, they will materially affect the appearance of the building.
- Repairs and minor alterations which do not materially affect the appearance of the building will normally only require consent if the building in question is listed.
- Listed Building Consent will be required (in addition to any other consent which may be required) for any works which in the view of the Local Planning Authority affect the character or historic interest of a listed building. Examples include the removal or replacement of features, repainting in a different colour, the fixing of security shutters or an alarm box, and installing blinds and advertisements.
- Advertisement Consent is often required for the display of signs, including most illuminated signs.
- Conservation Area Consent is only required for the total or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings or structures within a conservation area and therefore is unlikely to be relevant to this type of proposal.

Three what consents are needed?

4 Shopfronts

Shopfronts - principles of good design

In the past, buildings on the same street (often constructed at different times and in different styles) visually acknowledged each others existence and often shared common features – for example a strong vertical emphasis, a symmetrical façade, similar proportions, a simply detailed upper elevation with a complex base, and varying height and roofline. These principles of visual inter-relationship hold good today, and the Council will expect all proposals for shopfronts and advertisements to reinforce the positive character of their location. Where existing shopfronts already contribute effectively to the character of their location, the Council will normally expect their retention and restoration, particularly where the subject is located within a conservation area and/or the building is listed or its loss would adversely affect the setting of a heritage asset.

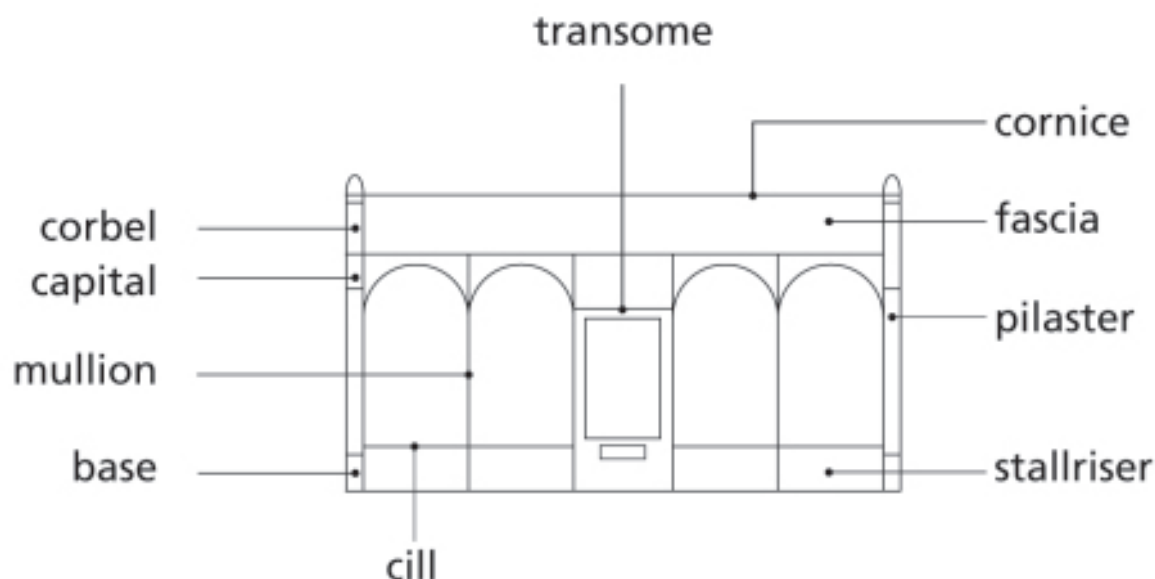
Sometimes elements of earlier shopfronts remain behind the fascias and pilasters of later, less appropriate frontages. Documentary or photographic evidence may provide further support for a scheme of reinstatement of the original in preference to wholesale replacement.

Advertisements need to be considered as part of the shopfront design. Often the business activity and culture of the trader can be expressed in the form and style of the design, within the overall character of the building and the street – leaving the signage to play a supporting role, rather than a dominant one. Signage should be designed to as to be intrinsic to the design of the overall shop front.

Detailed design guidance

Shopfront design includes the following basic elements, each of which has its own visual and practical function:

Figure 1 Elements of shopfront design



Pilasters – emphasise the vertical division between shopfronts;

Fascias – provides the space for advertising;

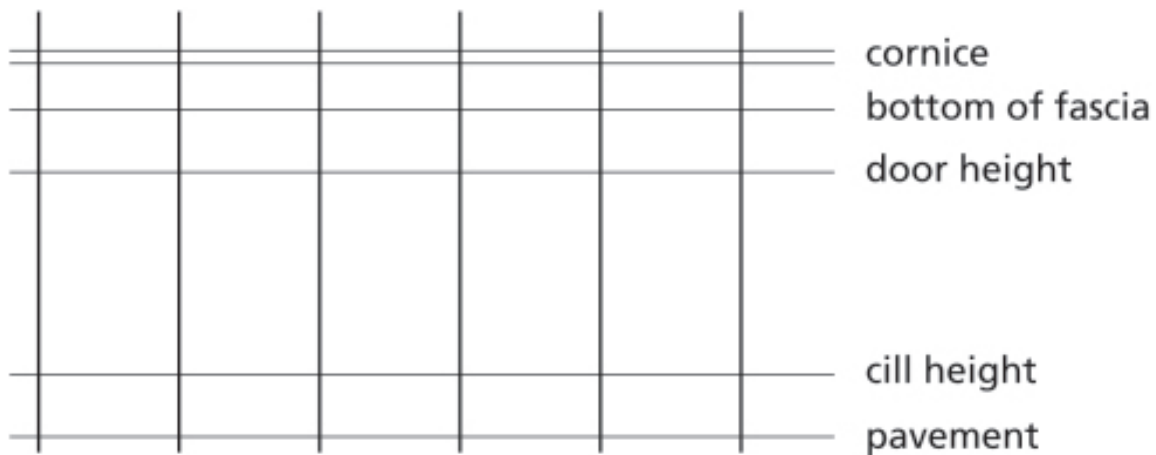
Cornice – gives a strong line at the top of the shopfront and sheds water away from the building;

Stallriser – provides protection at ground level;

Doorway – provides a visual focus sometimes emphasised by the doorway being recessed

These classic elements provide a general framework for the visual arrangement of the shopfront, within which geometry and proportions can be developed.

Figure 2 Shopfront Geometry and Proportions



Pilasters

Vertical emphasis within the general framework can be achieved through the pilasters. Their generally slender upright form, and the use of strong vertical profiling within their width, can both contribute to relating the shopfront to the rest of the building façade and to reinforcing the special identity of the shopfront itself. The visual role of the pilasters can be further developed by stepping them forward slightly from the building plane.

Fascias and cornice

It is important to consider the fascia as just one of a number of elements within the shopfront capable of projecting the identity and culture of the retailer. The result should be that the shopfront should convey the 'advertising' message as a whole, and that the form and extent of lettering and signage itself can be less dominant.

The location of the fascia places it in a commanding position to influence the presentation of the shopfront. Its prominence has led to an over-concentration on its use often as the sole means of projecting the character and identity of the street-level retail frontage. Whilst important, it should be seen in context with the other elements in the shopfront which collectively can be equally powerful in projecting character and identity over the wider area of the shopfront as a whole.

Excessively deep fascias should be avoided. The depth allocated within the framework should not normally exceed 18 inches (450 mm), except for a small minority of wide frontages where retaining the scale and proportions of the building elevation as a whole would provide the only justification for the increase.

The fascia and cornice should not extend above the height established in the original shopfront design where this is still evident, and in all cases there should remain a separation between the top of the cornice and the cills of the first floor windows appropriate to the scale and proportions of the building elevation.

Horizontal emphasis may be added to the shopfront design through the effective use of the cornice, either to counter-balance vertical emphasis derived elsewhere or, like the pilasters, to underline the limits of the shopfront. Terminating the pilasters under the fascia (as opposed to the use of corbels or decorated ends to the fascia), and projecting the cornice slightly further forward will provide additional emphasis.

Stallrisers

Together with the fascia and the cornice, the stallriser is the other principle element of horizontal emphasis. A stallriser should almost always be utilised in shopfront design, so as to avoid the use of glazing down to the ground which, unless designed very carefully, often looks unsatisfactory when viewed with the building elevation as a whole.

Its height may vary substantially within the general framework from around 16 inches (400 mm) to as much as the mid-height of the door, according to the use of the shop and the designer's intention. Its effect therefore in terms of emphasis, and of adding 'substance' to the shopfront as a whole is highly variable, and it should be used as a significant design tool within the overall composition.

A fairly recent development is the role of the stallriser as a defence against 'ram raiding'. Such physical protection as may be required should be made within the stallriser itself, although materials used externally should be sympathetic with those used on the shopfront as a whole. Bollards, or other anti-vehicle measures within the highway, are generally not a good design solution but may, if attractively designed, be preferable in some areas.

The use of a stallriser is also cost effective in avoiding the replacement of large areas of glazing following breakage, particularly with respect to insurance premiums and excesses.

Doorways

The position of the entrance doorway can be influenced by a wide range of factors, including the internal layout of the shop. The role of the doorway as a visual focus, however, and as a unifying element within the overall shopfront composition, should be considered carefully. If the upper elevation of the building is symmetrically ordered, and particularly where it has a strong vertical emphasis, there are good reasons in favour of a single centrally-located doorway or, where more than one entrance/exit position is required, of locating them equally from the centre position.

Consideration should also be given to linking the geometry of the shopfront more formally to that of the upper elevation, for example to align doorway width and position with upper windows (more usually) or brickwork/masonry (occasionally), particularly where the building character is strong.

Although there are good examples of asymmetrically organised shopfronts, a centrally arranged design often works best, particularly on widths involved in most shopfronts. The power of a doorway as a visual focus is considerably strengthened if it is recessed. Recessed doorways can provide an invitation to pedestrians to enter the shop, as well as providing shelter from inclement weather. They may also provide the means of enabling a gradually ramped access into the shop, so assisting access.

Glazing

The development of plate glass and the ability to create large single areas of glazing particularly within wider frontages has relaxed restrictions previously imposed by the fragile nature of the material. The aim, however, should be to use horizontal and vertical subdivision to reflect the geometry and proportions of the other principle elements of the shopfront and those of the building as a whole. Without this, the visual impression is one of an unsupported building 'floating' on large areas of uninterrupted glass. Glazing offers considerable scope in organising the geometry and proportions, and changing the character and style of the shopfront. Glazing panels within doors should generally relate to the height of the stallriser.

Use of third dimension

Stepping back the principal elements such as the fascia, pilasters and stallriser, in a series of closely spaced planes parallel to the building frontage will enhance any design and should be incorporated wherever practicable. Approached from the front this adds 'light and shade' and provides visual emphasis to the individual elements. Progressing along the street, it provides relief and texture to the building elevation.

Lettering and signage

It is important to consider the fascia as just one of a number of elements within the shopfront capable of projecting the identity and culture of the retailer. The result should be that the shopfront should convey the 'advertising' message as a whole, and that the form and extent of lettering and signage itself can be less dominant.

Hanging signs can be a means of supplementing this information and at the same time they can provide an attractive feature within the street, particularly if of a highly graphical form based on traditional principles. However, not more than one such sign should appear on each elevation, and any projecting sign should be sited so as not to exceed in height the height of any fascia sign.

Where house styles and colours are already predetermined by the retailer, both will need to be applied with discretion, particularly in sensitive locations such as Conservation Areas and on or near Listed Buildings, and with respect to the guidance otherwise provided in this note.

Blinds and canopies

Blinds and canopies can sometimes be detrimental to architectural and townscape qualities, and those which do not contribute to these elements, as well as those which are not conducive to public safety, will not be granted planning permission or advertisement consent. Canopies and blinds made from shiny plastic are rarely successful in contributing to the character of a street or building, and would not normally be acceptable.

Illumination

Internally illuminated box fascia signs can often look obtrusive and ungainly. In circumstances where they are acceptable they should be set within the framework of the shopfront so that their forward projection is kept to the absolute minimum, and only the letters or logos should be illuminated.

Externally illuminated hanging or projecting signs will nearly always be preferable to internally illuminated projecting box signs.

5 Security Shutters and Grilles

Introduction

The Council is committed to improving the prosperity of the borough and the quality of its environment. In particular, it is considered important to establish thriving town centres and ensure that the borough is an attractive place to live, work and do business. Equally, it is also recognised that businesses may require security measures to protect their premises. However, the design and appearance of any security measures needs to be carefully considered as sometimes such measures can be detrimental to the visual quality of buildings and areas.

Many modern security shutters were originally devised for the security of industrial premises. Whilst they can be fitted relatively easily and cheaply, they are generally not suited to use in retail areas. Solid, or almost solid, external roller shutters have a range of negative effects which outweigh the perceived security benefits. These negative effects include:

- A forbidding appearance that gives the impression that the area is susceptible to crime.
- The creation of unattractive 'dead frontage' where window shopping is precluded during the evening.
- The reduction or preclusion of internal/external intervisibility making premises safer for criminals once inside.
- Attraction of unsightly fly posting and graffiti.
- The concealing of important architectural features of the premises – to the detriment of the character of the host building and the surrounding area.

The purpose of this guidance, therefore, is to assist businesses, planning officers and Councillors in ensuring that there is an acceptable balance which allows high levels of security to be provided for businesses whilst maintaining and improving the ambience and attractiveness of the borough's urban areas. This involves assessing the need for and looking at different types and designs of security measures available, as well as carefully considering which measures are necessary, and how these can be applied sensitively to maintain the visual amenity and character of an area. This guidance applies to the whole of Rochdale Borough.

Will planning permission be required?

Planning permission will normally be required for anything that materially affects the external appearance of a building, such as external roller shutters of any kind. When the building in question is listed, Listed Building Consent is also likely to be needed for most external and most internal works and alterations, including the installation of external or internal shutters or other security measures. Where listed building consent is also required, applicants are advised that an application for listed building consent should accompany the application for planning permission, so enabling the impacts of the proposals to be properly considered.

If you are in doubt about whether or not something requires planning permission or other consents such as Listed Building Consent, you are advised to contact the Development Management Service.

Further information is also available on the Council's web pages at: www.rochdale.gov.uk/planning

Security issues

It is important to carefully consider a range of security measures, including design measures, if it is felt that there are security issues at a premises. It may often, for instance, be equally if not more important to secure the rear of the premises than the front. Some types of glass can provide more security than others, and anti-shatter film is another measure which could be considered. However these may not always be appropriate in listed buildings, conservation areas or where historic glass is in situ. Measures such as good lighting, CCTV cameras and alarms can all help to increase security and do not normally require planning permission.

Perhaps surprisingly, more traditional-style shopfronts using classical principles of shopfront design such as those outlined earlier in this guidance, can be more secure than modern designs with extensive panes of glass. Features such as stallrisers, mullions and glazing bars can make it much harder for thieves and

vandals to break windows and enter premises; smaller areas of glass are harder to break and cheaper to replace. Security issues mean that it is all the more important that traditional designs are preserved or re-instated wherever possible.

Planning considerations - general

Solid external roller shutters are severely detrimental to street scenes, creating a 'fortress' atmosphere and dead frontage, and projecting roller shutter boxes are highly disruptive to the building line and street scene. Solid shutters can also be detrimental to security by concealing the fact that there may be criminals inside, who have gained access to the premises from the rear, are easy targets for graffiti, and reinforce the fear of crime. Thus:

- *In all areas of the borough, planning permission or listed building consent will not normally be granted for the installation of solid, or almost solid, external roller shutters, nor for external shutter boxes, on the fronts of shops.*

Many 'perforated' roller shutter designs have similar impacts to solid shutters, and therefore are equally unacceptable. However, some perforated external roller shutters and open-style grilles, whilst providing increased security, create more interest by allowing some window shopping, thus encouraging more active streets, and also enable greater surveillance. Thus:

- *Perforated roller shutters, appropriately painted to match the colour of the shop front, may be acceptable where there is a proven and demonstrable high security risk based on security issues specific to the building, business or area rather than a generalised fears*. In these circumstances, only shutters with a high proportion of 'open' lattice to solid shutter will be permitted.*
- *Perforated shutters must be designed so that housing is concealed behind the fascia, and runners are concealed behind pilasters. External shutters shall not extend to ground level to not conceal any stallriser, and shall retain pilasters, fascia details or other architectural features.*
- *External lattice, 'brick bond' and open chain link grilles will normally be acceptable outside of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings, subject to the submission of details to ensure that matters such as the grille thickness and colour are appropriate.*

*Supporting information must be provided with the application which sets out details of the security risk, what other security measures have been considered besides shutters, why these are deemed unsuitable, and why alternatives such as internal shutters or lattice grilles cannot be used.

Information requirements

Planning applications for external security shutters must be accompanied with information to support the case for increased security measures. This should set out the security risk, rather than a perception of risk, and provide details of what other steps to increase security have been considered such as securing the rear of the premises, the installation of CCTV and other lighting, and reasons for their being discounted in each particular case.

The need to provide this information up front with a planning application will be included on the Council's local list of information requirements. Without this information, the application may not be registered and the processing of the application may be delayed.

The Council will consult Greater Manchester Police on all planning applications which it receives for external roller shutters. The Police will be asked to comment on the security risks of the premises, and provide guidance to the Council and to the applicant on what other options, or additional security measures might be necessary to adequately secure the premises

Planning considerations - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Protecting the borough's character and heritage, particularly in respect of conservation areas and listed buildings and their settings, is a priority for the Council, because of its importance for the quality of life of residents, the image of the Borough and potential to attract visitors and investment. The Council recognises

that there may equally be security issues relating to businesses locating in these heritage assets, just like anywhere else, however we will require security measures to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of these areas and buildings. The most effective way of securing and protecting a listed building or a building within a Conservation Area is by keeping it in active use.

Thus:

- In all Conservation Areas, external roller shutters will not normally be permitted. In exceptional circumstances, perforated shutters with a high proportion of 'open' lattice to solid shutter may be permitted provided that they meet the criteria outlined under 'planning considerations - general' above.
- Demountable grilles are the preferred option within Conservation Areas and provided they are of an appropriate thickness and colour, will normally be granted planning permission.
- External lattice, 'brick bond' and open chain link grilles may also be acceptable in Conservation Areas, subject to details to ensure that matters such as the grille thickness and colour are appropriate.
- External roller shutters will not normally be permitted on listed buildings (in Conservation Areas or otherwise) or within their settings. The special character and historic interest of a building which has led to that listing is individual to that specific building but the importance of the façade is often a key part of a building's interest. Therefore listed buildings do not benefit from a 'one size fits all' approach and applications for security measures will need to be bespoke and carefully designed having full regard to existing features.

Internal shutters and grilles

When fitted internally lattice grilles have minimal impact on the street scene. They should be open in their design rather than solid and should be removable or retractable so that they do not affect daytime trading. Internally fitted lattice grilles and open shutters would not normally require planning permission. However, if the building in question is a listed building, Listed Building Consent will be required.

Recessed shopfronts and doorways

Recessed doorways are a traditional feature of shopfronts, and lattice grilles or demountable iron gates are often used to protect them. However, they can provide hiding places for potential burglars/muggers and can attract other anti social activity. Consequently, the Council may permit an open grille or shutter across the opening so as to be flush with the shop front. These will normally be acceptable, subject to details in respect of such matters as grille thickness and colour.

