



Supplementary Planning Document

Shop Fronts including Signs and Shop Security



March 2015

Title

Shop Fronts including Signs and Shop Security Supplementary Planning Document

Subject matter

The purpose of this document is to provide more detailed guidance on the design of shopfronts, including signs and shop security, elaborating on the general design policies in the Local Plan.

Adoption Date

The Shop Fronts including Signs and Shop Security Supplementary Planning Document was adopted by Rutland County Council on 9 March 2015.

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Shop Fronts, including Signs and Shop Security

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Shop Fronts, including Signs and Shop Security

INTRODUCTION

Shop fronts are an important and dominant element in the townscape, requiring careful consideration if the overall appearance of a building, nearby properties and the shopping environment are to be safeguarded or enhanced. This is particularly important in town centres, within Conservation Areas, and where Listed Buildings could be affected.

This guidance has been prepared by the Council in order to ensure that the design of shop fronts in Rutland is of a high quality, contributing to the appearance of the street scene.

Policy CS19 in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) provides the overarching policy on Promoting Good Design. The requirements include that all new development will be expected to contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place, being appropriate and sympathetic to its setting and its relationship to adjoining buildings.

Policy SP15 of the Council's Site Allocations and Policies DPD provides more detailed guidance on design and amenity including that development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the streetscape of the local area. The detailing and materials of a building must be of a high quality, respecting and enhancing the local vernacular.

When is planning permission required?

It would be helpful to discuss your proposal with a Planning Officer at the Council Offices who will advise on whether or not planning permission is needed and on the suitability of the proposals. Details of the formal pre-application procedure are available on the Council's website.

Listed building consent may also be required for any proposals that affect the historic fabric of any listed building

SHOP FRONTS

General design principles

Traditional shop front design is based on balance, proportion and harmony and these principles are still applicable.

A traditional shop front is usually narrow in width and comprises a display window, frequently with ornamental glazing bars, transoms and surrounds, a shallow fascia panel, panelled side pilasters with carved corbelled brackets, a panelled stallriser beneath the window and often a recessed doorway. Fig 1 illustrates the main components of the traditional shop front.

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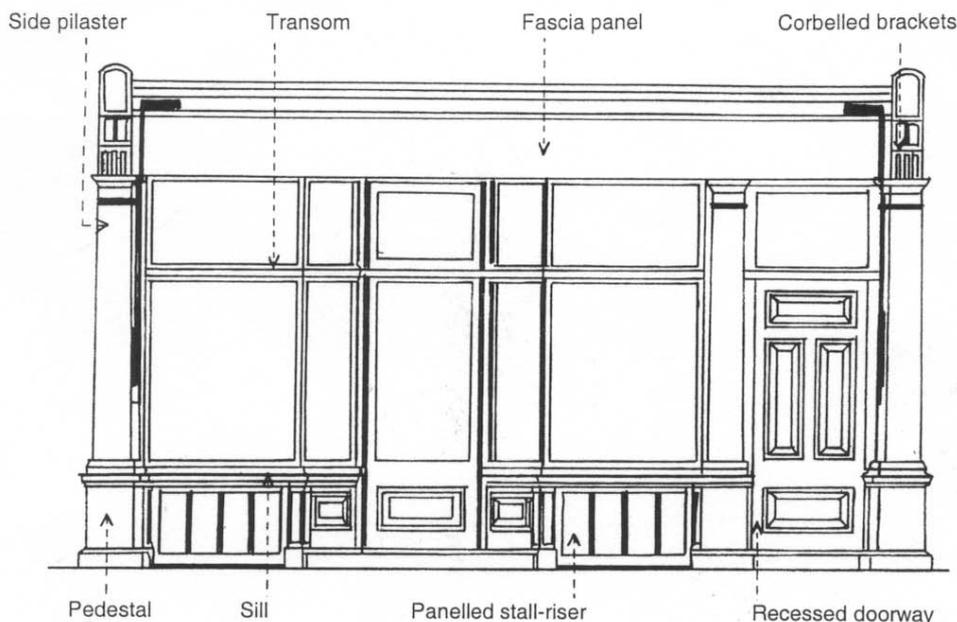
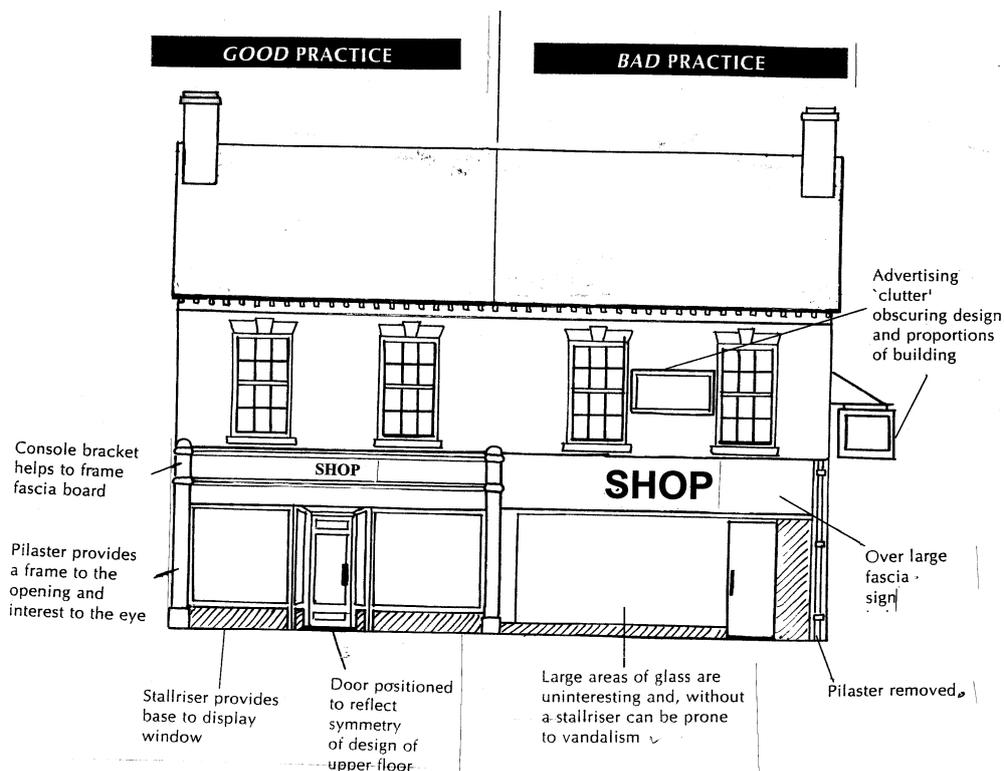


FIG 1: General Design Principles

Existing shop fronts using good traditional design principles are expected to be preserved intact, particularly if they comprise part of a listed building or are of importance to the character of a conservation area. In repairing such shop fronts the original work should be retained and the repair should seek to replicate the existing design. Figure 1A illustrates good and bad practice in shop front design.



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It is important to ensure that a new shop front is historically and architecturally credible with the property in which it is to be placed. New shop fronts should observe the traditional elements of design, particularly in the town centres of Oakham and Uppingham and where the appearance and character of a conservation area or a listed building would be affected.

They are expected to:

- have regard to the pattern of frontages in the street scene.
- acknowledge the design and proportions of the building in which they are to be situated, as well as nearby properties.

Shop front Detail

In summary new shop fronts should:

- not exceed 3.5 m in height;
- not span two or more buildings to maintain the individuality of each property;
- leave a clear space between the top of the shop front and the sill of first floor windows.
- be slightly recessed;
- incorporate visually robust window surrounds;
- normally limit the depth and size of fascias to 50cm;
- incorporate stallrisers with a minimum height of 50cm;
- avoid the use of bottle glass and extensive areas of glazing as large, single paned shop windows are vulnerable to vandalism and can provide an easy route for theft;
- utilise painted timber, preferably using dark background colours and where appropriate matching brick and stone work;
- avoid the use of unpainted timber and other modern materials;
- satisfactorily incorporate existing traditional shop front features.

Some of these aspects are now considered in more detail below:

Materials

On a traditional shop front natural materials will be preferable to artificial. Historically, painted or stained timber is used. It is a durable material, relatively cheap and easy to maintain. Timber can be moulded into a variety of profiles, is versatile and suited to varying circumstances. In environmental terms softwoods should be used in preference to tropical hardwoods.

Other materials such as bronze, chrome and marble are unlikely to be appropriate in Oakham, Uppingham or the villages.

Where modern or artificial materials are utilised, care should be taken that these are used in a way that is sympathetic to the surroundings and which does not compromise the appearance and integrity of buildings or the street scene. The use of artificial materials that are not in keeping with the historic setting of a shopfront (for example the use of high gloss finishes, rather than matt) should be avoided.

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Doors

The design and positioning of doors should be integral to the overall shop front design. Recessed doorways can relieve the frontage and add interest to the overall appearance. However, deeply recessed entrances can facilitate anti-social behaviour and allow criminals to act unseen. Where a shop front incorporates a separate access, for example to an upper floor, this will need to be an integral part of the overall design.

Fascias

Fascias should be appropriate to the character and proportions of the building, particularly the shop front. There is a tendency for some modern fascias to be disproportionately deep and too prominent, thereby dominating the shop front.

Traditionally fascias rarely exceed one fifth of the depth of the shop front and frequently they are narrower. They do not extend beyond the shop front surround, are contained by console brackets and sit below the sill of first floor windows.

Where a retail unit occupies two adjoining buildings the fascia should not stretch uninterrupted between the two and should reflect the integrity of each. The fascia should not obscure architectural detail, but rather it should be integral to the overall shop front design.

Factory-produced signs and those in a boxed form (sometimes internally illuminated) are not acceptable on a traditional shop front or in Conservation Areas.

Colour

Traditionally, shop fronts use recessive colours (dark blue, black, dark red or dark green) which leaves the window and its display to provide the “highlight”. In an historic context these colours will normally be the most appropriate and will help to maintain the character of the building and the area.

As with materials, there is usually a place in most high street settings for the use of non-traditional approaches. However, they should be used as part of a considered design approach and not be used to a degree where they begin to degrade the character of a street or area or the building itself.

Corporate Identity

One of the main factors in the declining quality of shop front design in recent years has been the trend for national multiples to standardise their image through the creation of house styles. Whilst a house style is primarily a commercial matter, it does become a material planning concern if incorporated into a shopfront design.

The primary planning concern is to ensure quality design and, as such, the house style must always be subordinate to architectural, urban design and planning considerations. This is not to say that corporate logos and colours can never be used, but they must be used in a manner which has regard to this Guidance and is appropriate to the building, using materials which reflect any unique design requirements.

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Cash dispensers

Ideally these should be located within the shop front, such as in the form of a lobby area. They should be designed as an architectural element of the shop front and be of simple design, with a minimal amount of display material.

Providing inclusive access

In order to take account of the needs of the mobility and visually impaired, the elderly and people with prams and pushchairs the following matters are expected to be given consideration in preparing proposals for shop fronts:

- level or gently sloping thresholds should be provided to shop entrances;
- provision of wider doorways;
- provision of lower counters and automated cash dispensers;
- avoidance of excessive areas of glazing;
- avoidance of easels or A boards, or the display of goods outside the shop within the footway.

SHOP SECURITY

It is accepted that there is often a need for security measures to be accommodated on shop fronts, particularly for what are termed high-risk outlets. However, it is important to safeguard the appearance of the shop front and avoid the creation of a depressed street scene after hours, which can detract from the vitality of the town or village centre. This is particularly the case where it is part of a listed building or important to the appearance of a Conservation Area. When new shop fronts are being created or old ones are being extensively remodelled they are expected to be designed to incorporate appropriate security measures from the outset.

In Summary:

- A substantial stall riser with concrete or other reinforcement behind it can be particularly effective against 'ram-raiding' or accidental or deliberate damage and will again lead to a reduction in replacement glazing costs;
- The use of vertical mullions and horizontal glazing bars, particularly if they have reinforced design, can make a shop front stronger.

Laminated glass

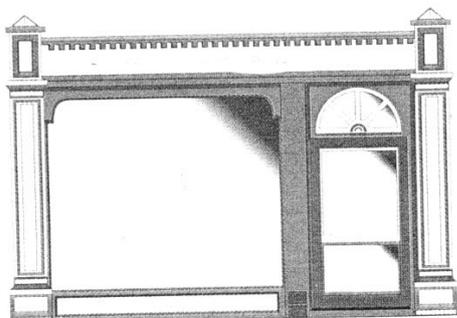
Laminated glass provides the least obtrusive solution to the appearance of the shop front and enables the inside of the shop to remain visible outside trading hours; however it does not provide a visual deterrent to crime.

Laminated glass will provide some resistance when a shutter or grill is not in place and will give the required level of security. In some cases shops may still retain old glass. Where this is the case every effort should be made to retain it. The use of laminated glass as secondary glazing may provide a solution (see Fig.2).

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Fig 2 Laminated Glass



Grilles

Grilles allow views into the premises outside trading hours and, combined with internal lighting, can help maintain the after-hours vitality of the town centre and contribute to the security of the premises. Perforated grilles sited internally are the preferred solution on premises where the risk of burglary is thought to be high but external shutters may be needed in the rare situations where there is a proven risk of repetitive vandalism.

Removable internal grilles fitted within the display area and to a lesser extent removable external grilles (Fig 3a) may have a limited impact on the appearance of the shop front and therefore may be considered to be acceptable (see Fig 3).

Fig 3 Internal Grilles

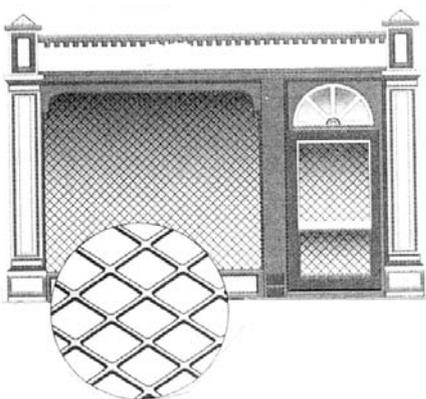
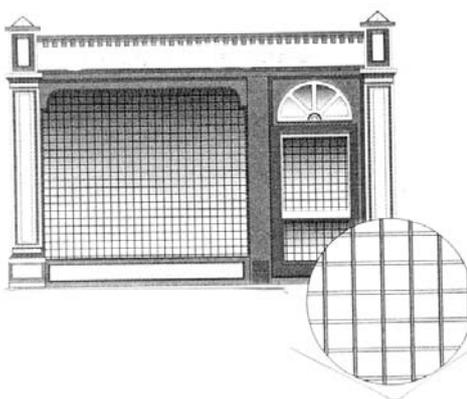


Fig 3a External Removable Grilles

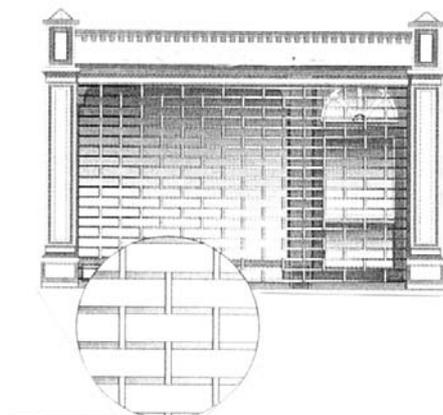


External roller grilles may also be acceptable; however the design and configuration of the grille is important (see Fig 4).

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Fig 4 Roller Grilles



If grilles are installed:

- they are expected to cover the glazed area only;
- existing architectural features worthy of preservation should be protected;
- any visible fittings, should be designed to be as unobtrusive as possible and painted to match the shop front;
- the storage box for a roller grill, when not in use, will be expected to be located in an unobtrusive position behind, or recessed below the fascia, with which it should be colour matched.

Shutters

Solid roller shutters (see Fig 5) detract from the vitality of a town centre outside opening hours and create a “dead” appearance. Furthermore, by screening the interior of the shop they may not be the best security option. This can also apply to what are termed perforated shutters (see Fig 6). As such, they should be avoided, particularly in conservation areas and on good quality traditional shop fronts, irrespective of whether they are listed.

Fig 5 Solid Shutters

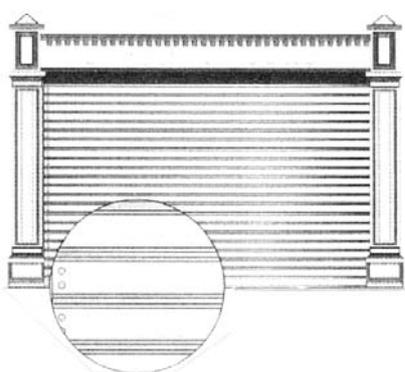
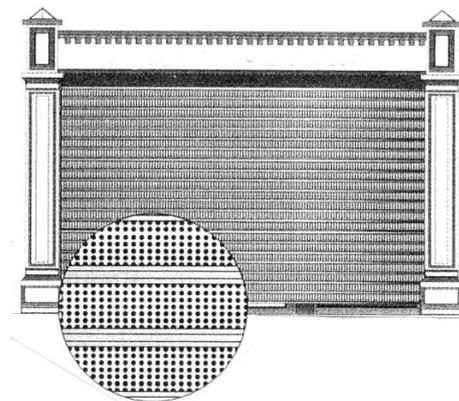


Fig 6 Perforated Shutters



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However, historically, removable shutters usually constructed of wood or iron were often used to provide security for shop premises. Such a system may still be appropriate, particularly for a traditional shop front where it was part of the original design, to maintain the integrity of the building.

Reinforcement

In combination with, or as an alternative to the use of the above security measures, it may be appropriate to use reinforced glazing bars. The reinforcement of the stallriser may also aid security.

SHOP SIGNS

Shop signage is an integral and prominent feature of the street scene in town centres. Suitable shop signs need not detract from the appearance of the area and can often contribute to its vitality. The siting and design of advertisements therefore requires very careful consideration, particularly if they are likely to affect the appearance of listed buildings or Conservation Areas.

Most shop signs will require an application for Advertisement Consent; Guidance notes and application forms can be found on the Council's website.

Some signs benefit from "deemed consent" and do not require an application for such Advertisement Consent. If in doubt, it would be beneficial to seek formal pre-application advice, before proceeding with any application.

As with new shopfronts above, any new signage that directly affects the character of a listed building will also require listed building consent.

Signs should ideally:

- Not be above the height of the fascia at ground floor level;
- Not span more than one individual property to maintain the proportions of buildings;
- Be limited to two signs per property to prevent clutter in the street scene;
- Not comprise box fascias and projecting box signs;
- Not comprise 'A' boards or similar within the highway.
- Only convey the name of the business and the street number, preferably in hand painted lettering applied to a painted fascia or a traditional hanging projecting sign;
- Be in proportion and sympathetic to the building and the shop front on which they are to be situated;
- Have regard to the position of and relationship with existing nearby signs;
- Not be located where they could potentially have an adverse impact on highway safety;
- Be non-illuminated.

Hanging signs

Hanging signs are a traditional feature within a shopping area and can add interest to the street scene. Traditional flat hanging signs attached to plain or decorative iron brackets are generally acceptable. The lowest part of the sign and any part of the mounting will be expected to be at least 2.15 m above the pavement level (see Fig 7).

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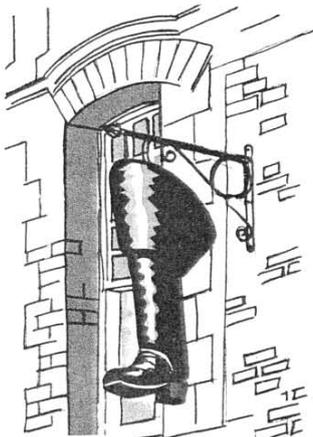
Fig 7



*Lights discreetly
designed into
ironwork of
hanging signs*



*Hanging symbol
sign*



*Sign hanging over
a shoe shop*

Illumination

In nearly all cases illuminated signs require advertisement consent. However such signs generally harm the appearance of an historic building, a conservation area, rural landscape or residential area.

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In many instances illumination is not necessary, particularly in town centres although it may be justifiable in exceptional circumstances, for example, for a business trading for a substantial time outside daylight hours. In these circumstances externally illuminated signs or illuminated signs within the premises are more likely to be acceptable, provided that light sources are:

- sensitively located and of an appropriate size, so as not to detract from the appearance of the building and add to street clutter;
- not over-bright as assessed by lux or candela levels and should not shine onto the public highway and cause glare to road users.

The use of reflected light from discretely positioned lighting units is usually acceptable. Full fascia illumination by the use of projecting lamps (e.g. brass swan-neck type) will not be considered appropriate.

Hanging signs may be illuminated by a discretely positioned external lamp.

Internally illuminated box and projecting signs can seldom be accommodated in a manner which is compatible with the design principles established in this guide, and are out of character with traditional shop fronts and historic buildings not be permitted.

Should internally illuminated signs be proposed then individually illuminated letters or halo lettering may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

Upper floor signage

The use of signs above first floor is not encouraged. However, where an upper floor is occupied by a separate commercial interest to the ground floor, it may be acceptable in the form of applied lettering of appropriate design on windows. Additionally, a small plaque at the ground floor access doorway may be acceptable.

Window Stickers

Stickers and posters placed in shop windows can have an adverse effect on the appearance of a building, the street scene and the image of the business.

In general posters and stickers should be avoided, but where they are used they should be no larger than A4 size and should not predominate the glazed area. An easy view into the shop or the window display should always be maintained.

Blinds

The main purpose of shop blinds is to protect goods from sunlight or to give shoppers some protection from the rain.

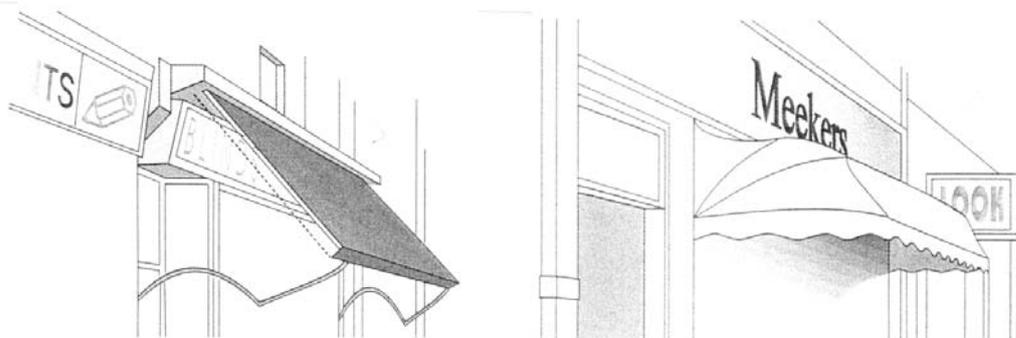
'Dutch Canopy' style blinds are particularly intrusive and should be avoided. They obscure the shop front and use materials, which are inappropriate to the main shopping areas, conservation areas and older buildings (see Fig 8).

The preferred solution is a straight awning on a traditional retractable canvas roller. These can be designed as an integral part of the shop front and concealed below the fascia when not required, in a blind box flush with the fascia (see Fig 8).

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Fig 8



Traditional blind

An inappropriate "Dutch Blind".

Blinds will normally run the width of the fascia and should not obscure existing architectural features. They will normally only be permitted on ground floor windows and should be no lower than 2.43 metres from the pavement level when open.

Account will also need to be taken of highway safety and blinds should not normally project more than two metres, with a one metre set back from the kerb and a ground clearance of 2.43 metres, when fully extended.

In erecting blinds regard should be had to the need to avoid clutter in the street scene, having regard to the location of other blinds and advertising. Care should also be taken in their use for signing in order to avoid an unacceptable proliferation of signs. Any applied lettering should be of an appropriate scale located within the centre of the blind.

Acknowledgement Note: Figures 1, 1a, 7 and 8 are extracts or adapted extracts from *Design Guidance for the Control of Shopfronts and Signs* produced by Winchester City Council. Figures 2, 3, 3a, 4, 5 and 6 are extracts from *Shop Front Security Supplementary Design Guidance* produced by Melton Borough Council.

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GETTING ADVICE FROM THE COUNCIL

This guidance relates to many of the factors that need to be taken into account in considering shop front design, signage and shop security. However, the contents of the guidance may not apply in its entirety or, alternatively, may not be fully comprehensive, in respect of any one particular proposal and it is advisable to discuss your proposals at an early stage with one of the Council's Planning Officers who will advise what permissions or consents are needed and on the suitability of the proposal. You should also check with Building Control Officers whether consent is required under the Building Regulations.

For further advice contact:

Development Control Section
Places Directorate
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