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Shop Front Design Guide

Design Guide Appendix

Draft Supplementary Planning Document



South Staffordshire Council

1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Design Guide

Promoting quality in the design of shop fronts can have positive and beneficial effects, improving the attractiveness of the District's principle retail areas and contributing towards the vitality and viability of established village centres.

This design guide is aimed at developers, businesses and members of the public and aims to establish the key principles which will be actively pursued to ensure that shop front developments are both appropriately designed and sensitive to their locality. It reflects recognised good practice in relation to supporting local character and provides a clear expression of the council's requirements. The council will not approve planning applications for new shop fronts that fail to give sufficient consideration to good design.



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The guide is not intended to provide detailed design solutions, focussing instead on scale, proportion, design and age, though where appropriate prescriptive design elements are incorporated. The aim is to reinforce individuality and quality whilst being sympathetic to the host building and its context, providing a positive contribution to the particular street scene and the wider area.

Focus of the Design Guide

This document comprises a set of general design principles and a section detailing additional considerations which will apply where schemes are within or could affect designated heritage assets primarily conservation areas and listed buildings. The guidance is applicable to shopfronts in the general sense, including the frontages of restaurants, public houses, banks, estate agents and other similar uses occupying the ground floor of buildings.

Status

The majority of shopfront alterations including the removal of old shopfronts and the installation of signage and advertisements will require permission. Shopfronts located within listed buildings will also require a separate Listed Building Consent. The shop front design guide forms part of the South Staffordshire Design Guide and much of the advice contained within the main design guide document will also have relevance when considering shopfront proposals. This guidance will be a material consideration when decisions are being taken relating to shop front proposals and associated schemes.

2. GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES

This section identifies the principles which should be taken into account when approaching changes to established shop fronts and the creation of new shop front designs. This section also provides advice on good design practice in relation to signage, security measures, illumination and the use of canopies. These general principles are applicable throughout the District.

SHOP FRONTS



A well designed, high quality shopfront will complement the architecture of the building within which it is situated, and the wider street scene. Existing poorly designed shopfronts will not be considered as setting a precedent for new proposals.

Traditional Shop fronts

Wherever possible, the framework of traditional shopfronts which have survived should be retained and where necessary restored. Where it is proposed to combine two or more traditional style shops into a single larger unit the separate identity of the shop fronts should be retained. The re-use of original painted timber roller shutters on historic shopfronts will be supported.

Relationship to the Building

New shop fronts should respect the style and period of the building within which they are situated. The size and shape of the shopfront should be determined in relation to the building within which it is placed. The shop front should be in scale and proportion and respect and enhance the building within which it is situated. All parts of a new shop front should be kept below the floor level of the first storey to ensure the hierarchy of the building is preserved.

Relationship to Streetscene

New shop fronts should always be designed to fit in with their wider surroundings or context. Attention should be given to ensuring that proportions, materials and details harmonize with the existing streetscene.

Access

Shopfronts should be designed to facilitate ease of access and usability by all. Doorways should ideally be level with the pavement, if this is not possible a ramped access should be provided. Consideration should also be given to the needs of the visually impaired if fully glazed entrance doors are proposed.

SIGNAGE

Fascia Boards



Boards should be in proportion to the building itself, boards should not intrude into upper floors or obscure existing architectural details. The material used should aim for a measure of consistency with adjoining properties and the lettering should be in proportion to the size of the fascia board.

Hanging Signs

Such signs need to be sited in a manner which will not impact on public safety. In general there should be no more than a single hanging sign per shop unit. Traditional signs of a modest scale will be favoured; support will not generally be given for illuminated, flashing or moving signs.



'A' Boards

Positioning of 'A' Boards should be sited so as not to cause a potential hazard. In general smaller, more discreet boards will be favoured.

ILLUMINATION

Lighting to any shop front, signage or hanging sign will require approval from the Local Planning Authority. It is generally considered that the illumination of a shop front is only required for businesses that operate in the evening. Those that close at 17.30 should rely on internal illumination for security purposes. Any proposed illumination required for evening operation should be given careful consideration.

Illuminated signs should take into account impact on road users and not have a negative impact where situated within residential areas, signs should not project onto the street scene. The brightness and style of illumination should be in keeping with the area in which it is located, intermittent flashing signs will generally not be considered to be appropriate.

SECURITY

Security measures should be gauged and considered in relation to the building and the shop front and should always be incorporated into new shop fronts at the design stage. Consent will be required for any proposals to install external roller shutters. Additional consent will be required with respect to measures affecting a Listed Building (see below).

Security measures should have a minimal impact on the appearance of the building and should not be fixed to or obscure any architectural details of the shop front. There will be a strong preference for the use of security glass or internal security measures rather than external roller shutters which can have a negative impact on the street scene. Any shutter box housing should be integrated into the shop front and out of view of the street scene.

CANOPIES



There will be a preference for folding or fixed canopies of a traditional design using traditional materials.

3. DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO HERITAGE ASSETS

The District contains a significant number of designated heritage assets including listed buildings and village centre conservation areas:

SHOPFRONTS

New shopfront design should as a minimum 'preserve' but preferably 'enhance' the local character. Where a conservation area has been classified as 'at risk' the council will seek schemes which will 'enhance' the character and appearance of the conservation area.

New shop fronts should not appear conspicuous as a result of the massing, materials and colour choices employed. Where appropriate modifications to a standard corporate approach to shopfront designs will be sought where this would be more in keeping with the aim of conserving and enhancing heritage assets.

SIGNAGE

Signs should be in proportion to the shop front, when placed on historic buildings they should not cause harm to the building or obscure architectural features that help to define the character of the building.

Fascia Boards

Wherever possible traditional fascia's should be retained with lettering ideally placed directly on the fascia, a favoured approach is the use of a dark background with lighter coloured lettering.

The following types of fascia's will generally be considered unacceptable:

- modern plastic or aluminium fascia's
- intermittent flashing, moving or backlit/internally illuminated fascia's
- the use of shiny, glossy, highly reflective and luminous colours
- box fascia's

Hanging Signage

Hanging signage can be a useful form of advertisement, increasing numbers can create visual clutter, undermining the advertising purpose and negatively impacting on the historic character of the street scene.

The retention and use of existing metal brackets will generally be supported, the scale and size of hanging signs should respect the scale, form and appearance of the building and should not obscure existing architectural detail. Signs should be placed in consideration of pedestrians and should not conflict with the safety of the highway. Signs should generally be restricted to one per shop unit.

Internally illuminated signs and projecting box signs will generally not be considered acceptable.

'A' Boards

The use of 'A' Boards can often cause street scenes to become cluttered and can detract from the character of the village centre. Such forms of advertisement should be rarely adopted. Where they are permitted such signs should respect the building and street scene, and use materials and colours which reflect those of the shop, in most cases the sign should be small and discreet. Signs should always be sited where they will not present a potential hazard to pedestrians.

Large or illuminated signs will generally not be considered to be acceptable.





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Wall Mounted Signage

Commercial premises often use multiple signs on various parts of the building. The use of such signs should not result in a cluttered appearance which detracts from the character of the heritage assets. Signs should respect the building and streets scene, should reflect the materials and colours of the shop front and should not obscure any architectural features of the building.

Illuminated signs and signs out of proportion with the shopfront and street scene will generally not be considered favourably.

Other Signage

Large static signs may be utilised by shops to provide further advertisement opportunities. Such signage should be in keeping with other signs within the conservation area and should not exceed the height of the fixing or be internally illuminated. Such signage should also not prove hazardous to pedestrians.

ILLUMINATION

In addition to the general requirements for approval, Listed Building Consent will be required for any form/type of lighting or to the shop front/signage where this relates to a Listed Building.

External Illumination

Lighting design should be carefully considered in order to reflect the character of the shop front and its impact on the street scene. External illumination should be discreet and kept to a minimum. Illumination should be designed as an integral element of the new shop front.

External illumination should not be fixed to the building fabric and should not harm the appearance of the building or obscure architectural details of the building.

Concealed Illumination

Concealed strip lighting consisting of a metal tubular cowl painted to match the shop front colour scheme will generally be considered acceptable. In certain circumstances integral spotlights concealed within a painted projecting soffit or moulded cornice may be appropriate.

The following forms of concealed illumination will generally be considered unacceptable:

- Internally illuminated box signage
- Spot lights/floodlights mounted on the fascia, cornice or elsewhere on the shop front
- Partial or whole illumination of a building frontage above the shop front; this will generally be resisted unless reasons for this can be strongly justified
- Neon lighting;
- Flashing, intermittent or moving illuminated/displays

SECURITY

Within Conservation Areas and/or on Listed Buildings, security measures should be carried out in a respectful and sensitive way, which does not detract from the character and appearance of the building or its location. In addition to the general consent requirement regarding external shutters, Listed Building Consent will be required for internal roller shutters on listed buildings.

Roller Shutters

Support will be given for the use of internally located shutters; perforated and designed to be in keeping with the design of the shop front. Where possible, window displays should not be obscured, and the grille should be suitably painted or colour coated to disguise or coordinate with the existing colour scheme.

The use of modern external roller shutters and large projecting external shutter boxes will generally not be considered acceptable.

Glass

The use of toughened glass can provide a viable alternative to the use of shutters. The use of such measures should be integrated into the design of new shop fronts. In general the replacement of historic glass within listed buildings would be resisted.

Lighting

The use of security lighting will be considered on its merits, though the use of floodlight or additional high luminance lighting will generally be resisted.

Alarm Boxes

Consent is required to install an external alarm box on a listed building; careful consideration should be given to the siting of an alarm system and generally alarm boxes should not be fixed to the main frontage or any architectural features of the building.

CANOPIES

The use of fixed blinds or modern PVC canopies will generally be not considered acceptable on a listed building or in a conservation area.