

Spelthorne Borough Council

Shopfronts and Associated Signs



Design Guidance

Well designed shopfronts and advertisements can greatly improve the appearance of shopping areas and enhance the success of business.

At Spelthorne we wish to encourage a high standard of design in shopfronts and associated signage throughout the Borough. This leaflet provides guidance to help achieve this.

April 2007



Guiding Principles

Introduction

The Council recognises that a rigid approach to shopfront design would be inappropriate, given the variety of building types located within the Borough.

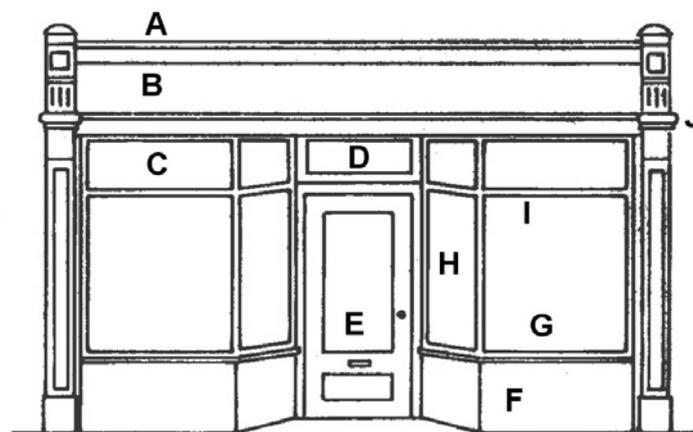
The following advice therefore aims to provide a general framework, which both successfully advertises the premises and enhances the visual character of the area.

The guidance is based on the following principles:

- Shopfronts should be in keeping with the host building in design and materials. Fascia, window and stallraiser proportions should relate in scale to the host building and adjoining properties.
- Advertisements should be limited in scale and number. Proposals within or adjacent to residential areas and open spaces will not normally be acceptable.
- Projecting signs should relate to the building and area where they are displayed in terms of design, scale, illumination and position.
- Special regard will be given to shopfront proposals within Conservation Areas and on or near Listed Buildings. Advertisements on Listed Buildings are to be modest in design and normally non-illuminated.

The preservation of Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings is very important, with extra controls in existence for new development and alterations. The Council will therefore generally require higher standards of design for shopfronts and associated signage within these areas. **(You are strongly advised to seek expert advice in the preparation of your proposals).**

Elements of a Traditional Shopfront



- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Cornice | F. Stallriser |
| B. Fascia | G. Sill |
| C. Blind Box | H. Mullion |
| D. Transom Light | I. Transom |
| E. Panelled Door | J. Pillaster and Corbel |

Shopfront Design

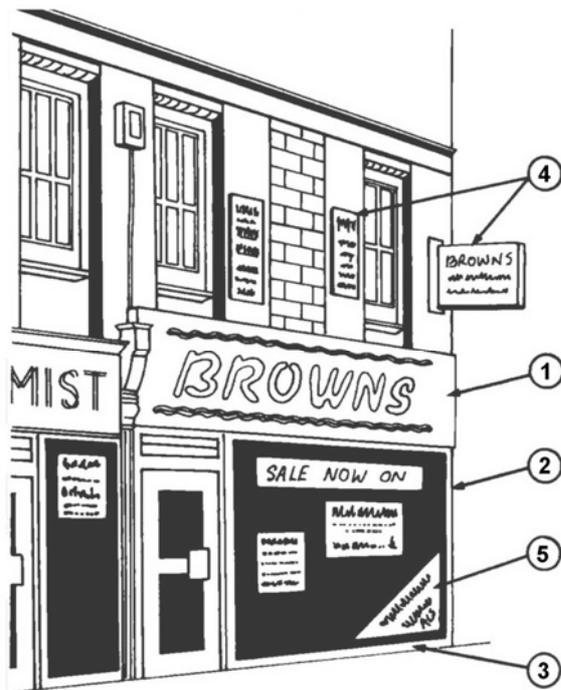
Poor Features

Several factors can create unsightly shopfronts, causing an unsympathetic relationship with the host building and surrounding area. For example:

- Overlarge fascias or box signs [1].
- Large full length windows that detract from the scale and character of the building [2].
- Modern plastic materials and anodised aluminium door and window frames [3].
- Poorly positioned signs [4].
- Numerous flat and protruding signs
- Window stickers and free standing displays [5].
- Solid external shutters (stallrisers, toughened glass or good internal grilles are better).

Unsightly features at higher levels may detract from a well designed shopfront e.g:

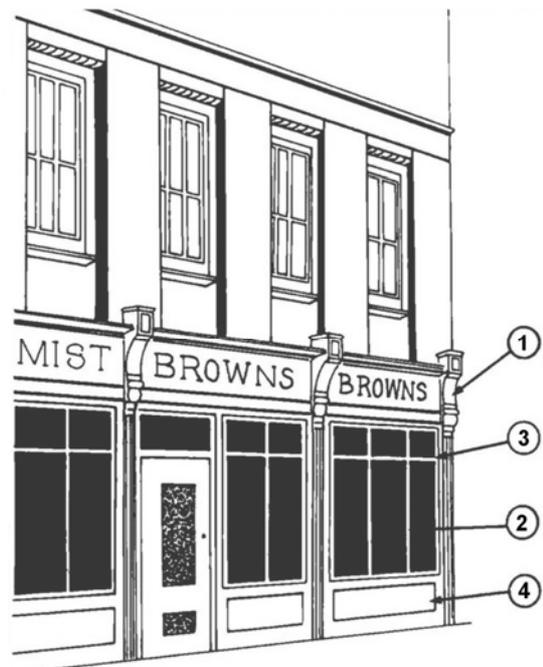
- Old brackets and unsightly cabling.
- Poorly blocked up windows.
- Obtrusive air conditioning units and alarms.



Good Features

A respect for the character, scale and proportions of both the host building and surrounding area is vital in creating a well designed shopfront. The following factors should be considered:

- The retention/reintroduction of original design or decorative features, e.g. corbels [1].
- The use of traditional materials.
- The overall colouring scheme should harmonise with the host building and total street scene and, if possible, emphasise important design elements.
- Proportionally scaled windows. The use of vertical glazing bars [2] and transom bars [3] can improve the façade.
- The introduction of stallrisers of timber or brick construction depending on building type, with a minimum height of 0.5 metres or comparable to adjoining properties [4].
- Fully retractable blinds with adequate pedestrian clearance. Avoid garish colours and shiny plastic materials.



Fascia Boards

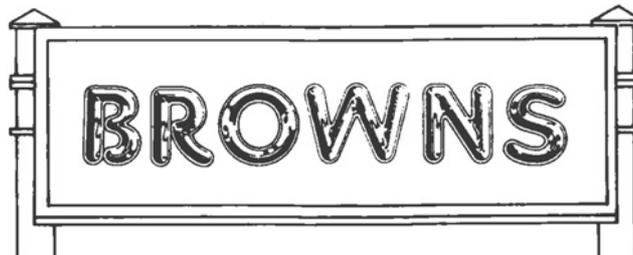
Important Features

Fascia boards divide a shopfront from the upper floor levels of a building and both scale and position are important. It is essential to examine the host building and adjoining properties when designing fascia boards. The following should be considered and incorporated in the design:

- The scale of the board should be in keeping with the host building, neighbouring properties and the general character of the area.
- Architectural details should not be obscured.
- The fascia depth should be no more than one quarter of the height from pavement level to the base of the fascia.
- The position of the board should ensure a gap below first floor windows.
- Fascias should ideally be in line with adjoining boards unless those boards are out of scale with their host buildings.



Appropriate fascia



Inappropriate fascia

Design Suggestions

Try to avoid standardised 'off the shelf' designs. The use of hand painted timber fascias is generally recommended, while more modern materials will be considered on their own merits. Designs incorporating dark backgrounds and gold leaf or light coloured lettering give an appearance of quality and are clearly legible. There are numerous lettering styles to be considered that can reflect the type of business being advertised. Lettering should be well spaced and proportioned for both the fascia and building size.

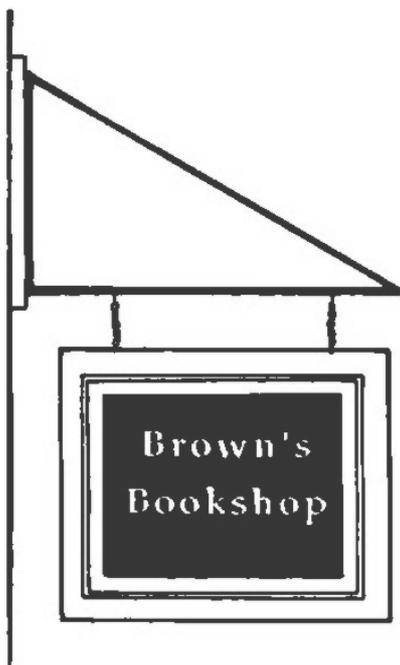
Replacing a shopfront and fascia can be an opportunity to enhance not only your business but the building and general street scene as well. Harmony of style created between neighbouring shop units can also improve the overall effect.

Projecting Signs

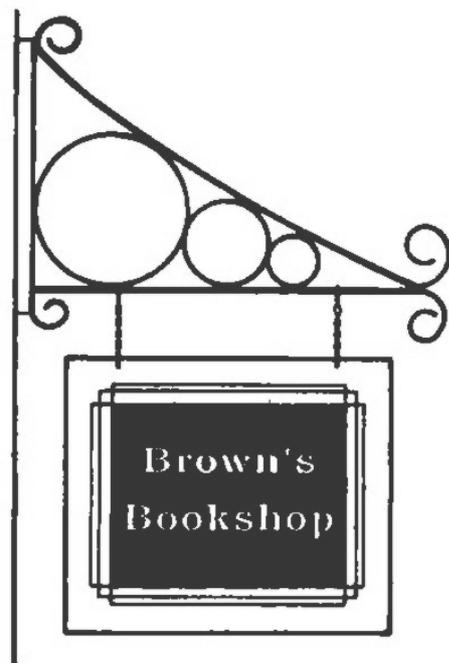
Important Features

All projecting signs are required to be in keeping with their host building. If situated in a Conservation Area they must also be in keeping with the surrounding area. The style and character of some Listed Buildings is such that it may be inappropriate to allow any form of additional signage. However, with most buildings there is no objection in principle to one projecting sign. Regard should be given to the following:

- *The use of traditional designs will be encouraged.*
- *Perspex box signs will not be acceptable.*
- *The sign should be in scale with the host building and generally not exceed 600mm x 400mm in size.*
- *The sign should not project more than 800mm from the wall to which it is fixed.*
- *The base of a hanging sign should ideally be level with the base of the fascia, with the bracket fixed immediately above the fascia.*
- *Occasionally it may be appropriate for the sign to be higher. If so, the base should not normally be higher than the sill height of first floor windows.*
- *The base of any sign should be a minimum of 2.1 metres above pavement level.*
- *Signs should be positioned above pilasters where possible.*



Plain Design



Scrolled Design

Design Suggestions

Emphasis will be placed on the use of traditional materials for both the sign and bracket. Timber signs are generally appropriate, while more modern materials will be considered on their individual merits. Particular regard will be given to the use of colour, with the guidance for fascia boards equally relevant to projecting signs. Brackets should be constructed of cast or wrought iron and painted black. More modern solutions may be acceptable on modern buildings outside Conservation Areas.

Further Advice

Illumination

Illuminated advertisements are an important feature of commercial areas and used sensitively can enhance the visual appearance of town centres. In all cases illumination should be static, with its intensity kept to a minimum, and not cause a distracting glare.

Within Conservation Areas proposals for illuminated signs will be considered very carefully and only allowed where sympathetically designed. Internally illuminated signs will not normally be allowed. There is a presumption against illuminated advertisements on Listed Buildings. In sensitive locations, where some illumination is acceptable, time limits may be imposed through conditions of the planning consent.

Where internally illuminated signs are appropriate the use of dark backgrounds and lighter lettering is recommended.

External illumination may be acceptable where internal lighting is inappropriate. The light source may be concealed in a narrow metal trough fixed above or below the sign. Limited direction spot lights may be another acceptable option provided they can be discreetly located.

Access Requirements

In accordance with Council policy shop entrances should be flush with the pavement level wherever possible, with a maximum 12 mm height weather sill. The use of steps is to be avoided. Doors should have a minimum clear width of 800mm to accommodate wheelchairs and pushchairs.

A separate leaflet and guidance notes on access for disabled people is available from the Council. Individual consideration will be given to access requirements for historic buildings to minimise any possible conflict with conservation issues.

Upper Floor Uses

Suitable occupation of upper floor levels above a shop will help maintain the visual and economic attractiveness of the property. Separate entrances should be retained where they exist. If there is no scope to advertise upper floor businesses at ground floor level, the use of lettering applied directly to upper floor windows is suggested. The lettering should be no more than 100mm high.

Statutory Requirements

New shopfronts generally require planning permission and building regulation approval. Shopfront applications submitted for Listed Building or Conservation Area consent should include front elevation drawings showing adjacent properties, together with full details of materials and colours.

Proposals for advertisements including projecting signs may require Advertisement Consent. Listed Building Consent may also be required if the host building is statutorily listed. All consents should be acquired before commencement of works.

Council Officers will be pleased to give further advice on any matter contained in this leaflet and can be contacted at the address below. We suggest you contact us at an early stage in order to ascertain the requirements for your particular proposal. There is, however, a charge for pre-application advice, details of which are available on the Council website.

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