

The Design of Shopfronts Signs & Advertisements

DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES
DEPARTMENT

Swale
BOROUGH COUNCIL
NORTH KENT COAST

PLANNING AND
DEVELOPMENT
GUIDELINES No.4

Introduction

The form and design of shopfronts can influence the quality and character of our towns and villages. At the same time shops compete with each other and shopkeepers need to make their whereabouts known. The object of this guidance is, therefore, to seek a balance between commercial requirements and the need to maintain and enhance the quality of our environment, particularly in the historic town centres. The Borough Council believes that a high-quality approach to visual design will be of benefit to both customers and shopowners, since a quality environment will be attractive to visit and hence more likely to generate higher levels of business.

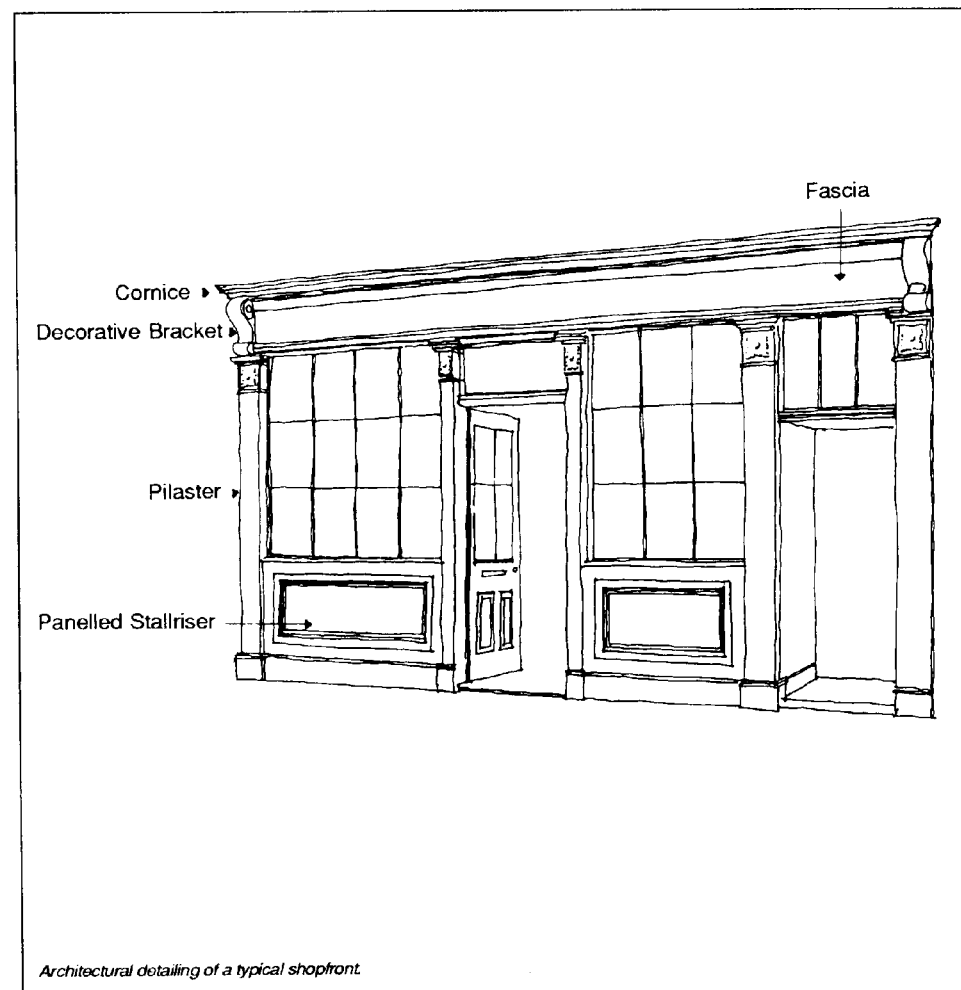
It is intended to provide future applicants with a guide to the criteria which the Borough Council will have regard to when considering applications concerning shopfronts and advertisements and this, it is hoped, will lead to a speedier processing of applications for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent and Building Regulation Approval.

It is not the aim of this statement to provide a set of inflexible rules nor does the Borough Council wish to stifle creative design. The policy is intended to lay down general guidelines, which will be interpreted in accordance with the merits of the building under consideration and the area in which it is situated.

It is hoped that it will be accepted as providing an overall framework to assist designers in making a positive contribution to the character of each individual town or village in the Borough.

Planning Policy

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) No.19 entitled "Advertisement Control" also gives guidance by which applications for planning permission or express consent will be determined. Department of the Environment Circular 8/87 entitled "Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas-Policy and Procedures", also provides further guidance relating to listed buildings in Appendix IV, although this will be superseded by publication of a new PPG on the subject. Both are available for inspection at the Council offices.



Architectural detailing of a typical shopfront.

The Design of Shopfronts

1.0 The Borough Council will encourage the design of shopfronts and the fronts of commercial premises to be of a high standard.

1.1 The Borough Council will require commercial interests who have adopted a "corporate image" to use discretion with regard to standardised designs, colours and materials particularly within conservation areas;

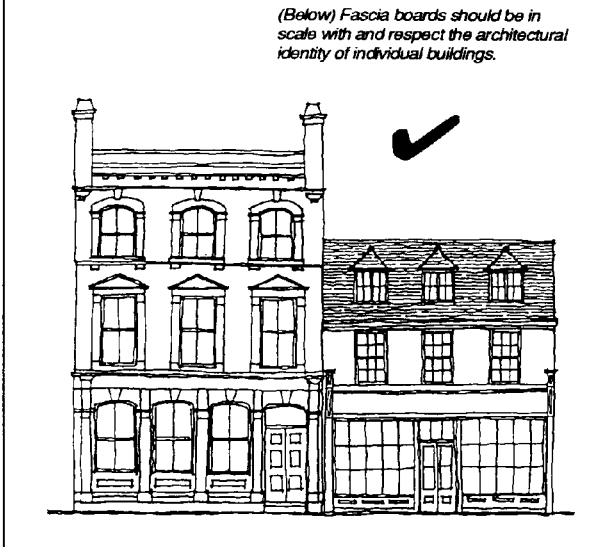
1.2 The Borough Council will seek the retention of traditional style shopfronts wherever possible; this will be required particularly upon listed buildings or within conservation areas.

1.3 Applications for planning permission or listed building consent for new shopfronts or alterations to existing shopfronts will not normally be considered acceptable if they involve:

- the removal of features which are considered by the Borough Council to be of architectural interest such as pilasters, stall risers and console brackets;
- alterations which are not confined to the ground floor facade within the perimeter of existing window area;



(Above) Linking fascias at a common level which do not respect the identity of individual buildings will not normally be considered.



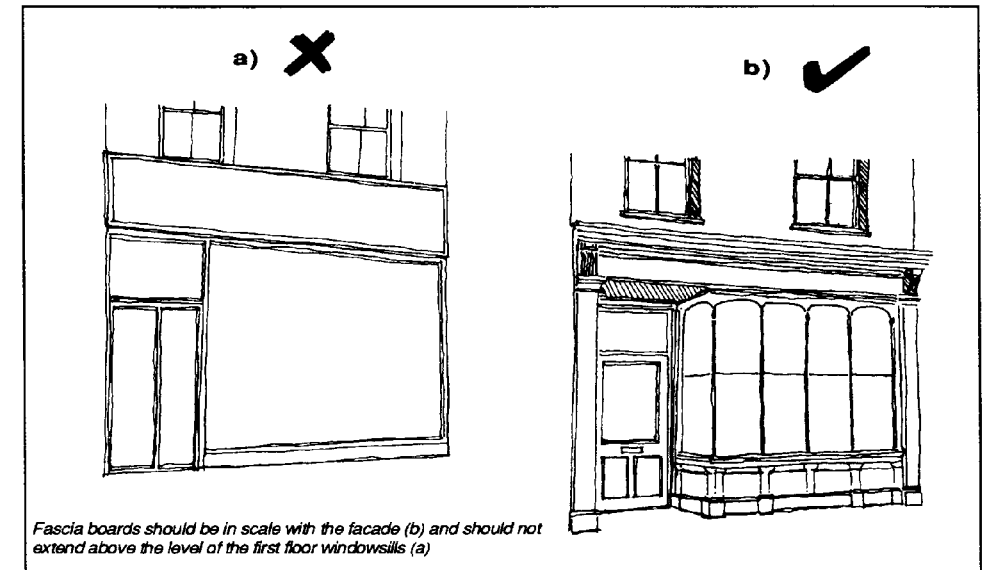
(Below) Fascia boards should be in scale with and respect the architectural identity of individual buildings.



The use of inaccurate "period style" details will be discouraged. Well Designed window signs will be permitted where appropriate.

- the construction of fascias of a common level linking two or more buildings that have separate architectural identities.
- the use of external roller shutters or grilles (see paras 1.9-1.14.).

1.4 In appropriate locations, such as within conservation areas and upon listed buildings, the Borough Council will encourage the replacement of modern and



Fascia boards should be in scale with the facade (b) and should not extend above the level of the first floor windowsills (a)

inappropriate shopfronts. The design of the new shopfront must reflect the character of the building and appropriate materials must be used.

1.5 The use of "Period Style" details which are not accurately based upon good historic precedent will be discouraged.

1.6 The Borough Council will expect the shopfronts of new buildings, particularly those in conservation areas, to be in scale with the building and to be subdivided into small units which are sympathetic to the character of adjoining buildings in the street. Large modern plate glass shopfronts without any visual support for the upper part of the premises can have a very unfortunate effect.

1.7 In conservation areas and upon listed buildings the use of traditional materials will be required, appropriate to the building and location, replacing materials from any previous unsympathetic alteration which may have taken place. The Borough Council will discourage the repetitive use of such materials as anodised aluminium and polished acrylic sheeting in preference for hardwood or softwood painted finishes and matt finishes. It should be noted that the Borough Council wishes to discourage use of tropical hardwoods, unless from a sustainable source.

1.8 When an existing fascia is replaced the Borough Council will require a reduction in the height where this is considered to be excessive, and will seek the use of sign written and painted fascias. The fascia board should not be out of scale with the building as a whole and should be generally finished at the top with a cornice or capping.

Security Doors and Grilles

1.9 Problems of vandalism and theft are increasingly drawing attention to the need for external security installations to shopfront windows.

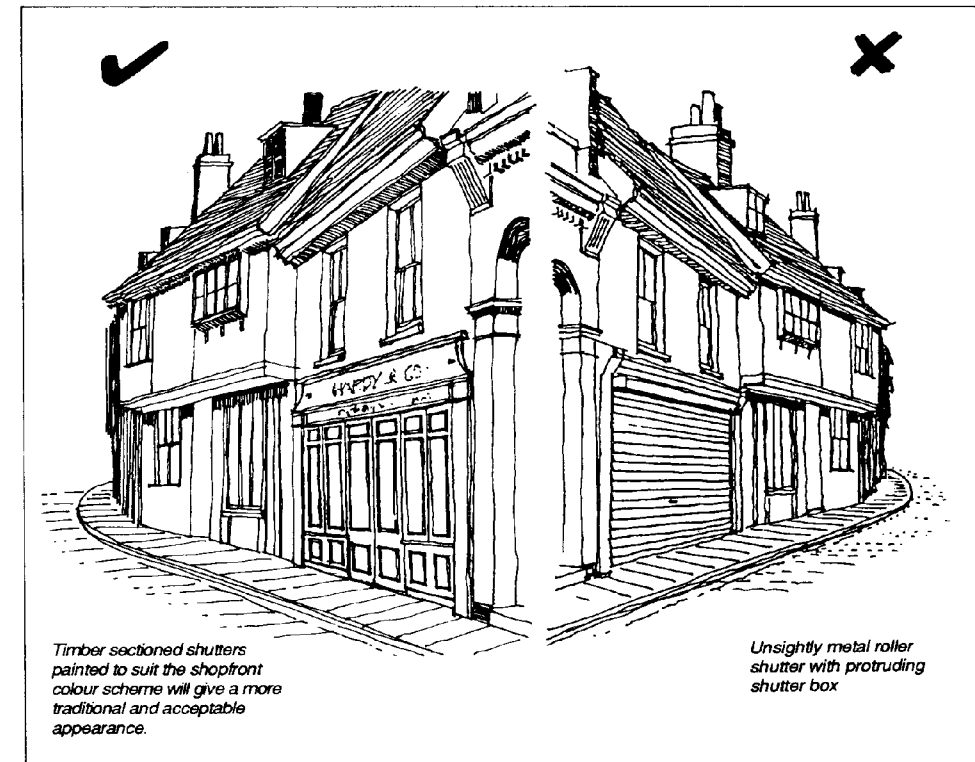
1.10 Regrettably, where installation involves the installation of unsightly roller shutter or grille boxes to the exterior of retail premises at fascia level, this can have a detrimental effect on both the appearance of the building and the street scene in general and roller shutters in particular can give a "deadening" appearance to town centres after normal shop closing times.

1.11 Whilst it is clearly desirable that shop displays should remain visible after opening hours, the case for some form of security protection is greater where shops are dealing with high security goods such as jewellery, antiques, or other high value goods.

1.12 There are methods available which could overcome these problems without resorting to external roller shutters or grilles. For example, where large modern plate glass windows have been installed in the recent past to traditional shopfronts, particularly in respect of listed buildings or in conservation areas, new shop windows with sub-divisions appropriate in character and period of the individual property could be installed. This can not only improve the appearance of the shopfronts and the streetscene in general but also lessen the cost of repairs by restricting the damage to smaller areas of glass.

1.13 Internal grilles can be installed in unlisted buildings without the need for planning permission. Listed building consent would be required for such alterations in listed buildings but could be granted where the installation would not be detrimental to the character or appearance of the building and no features of interest would be lost by such installation.

1.14 Traditional wooden panelled shutters in demountable sections (see illustration) were common in the 18th, 19th and early 20th century. The Borough Council may allow such shutters, either painted or stained to suit the shopfront colour scheme, and this will give a more traditional and acceptable appearance. In appropriate cases, roller grilles, but not roller shutters, may be allowed provided



they fit into the fascias of the buildings. Shop owners should always consult with the Director of Development Services who will consider each case on its individual merits and advise accordingly.

Signs & Advertisements

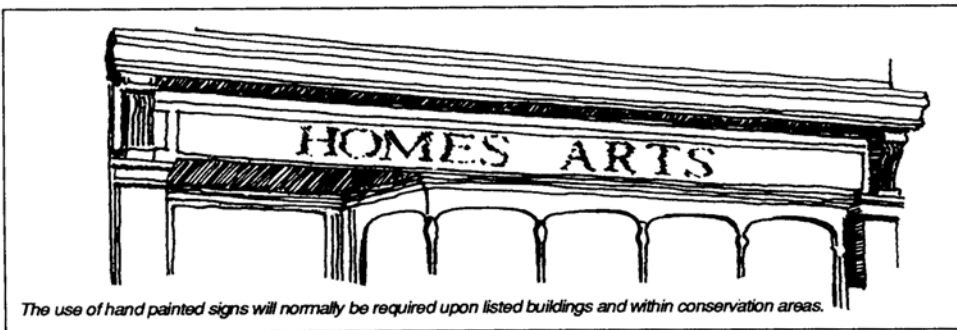
2.0 Organisations which may have "corporate" images should have regard to the character of the area and building and will be required to show flexibility in appropriate instances. It may be possible for essence of a modern corporate image to be incorporated within old advertising styles. Examples would include logos incorporated within tiling, window etching or on a suitably located enamel sign.

2.1 Signs and advertisements will normally be restricted to the ground floor wall area, in order to avoid the proliferation of signs at upper floor level.

2.2 The proliferation of signs and unnecessary repetition of information will be resisted.

2.3 Signs will only be allowed where they are in scale and character with the building.

2.4 Where a business occupies 2 or more adjacent dwellings, a continuous fascia should be avoided.



The use of hand painted signs will normally be required upon listed buildings and within conservation areas.

2.5 The Borough Council will expect all advertisement material to be of a good standard of design and to enhance the appearance of the building concerned. The existence of a former unsuitable sign should not be allowed to influence the design of the replacement.

2.6 The use of hand painted signage will normally be required upon listed buildings or within conservation areas.

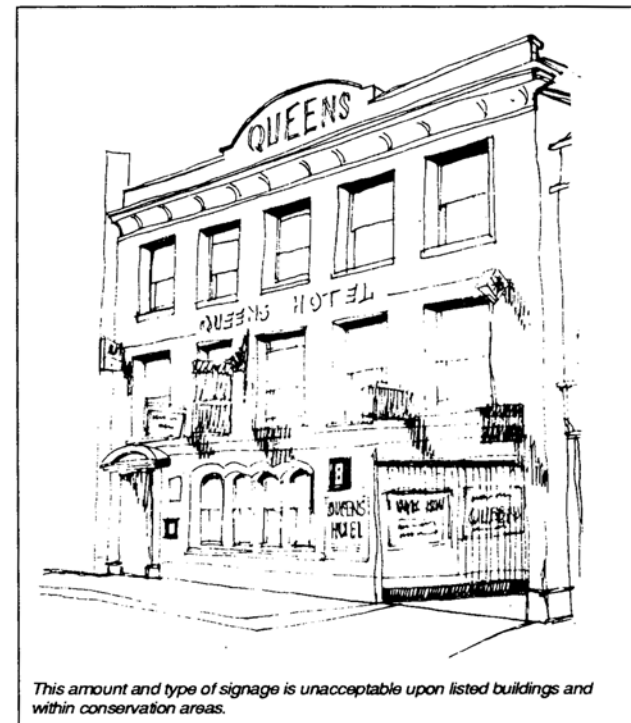
2.7 Well designed signwritten window signs will be permitted where appropriate as an alternative to fascia or projecting signs.

Illuminated Signs & Advertisements

3.0 Illuminated signs will not normally be permitted outside recognised town centres.

3.1 Within conservation areas and upon listed buildings the Borough Council will not permit the use of internally illuminated box fascia or projecting signs. The use of neon signs will also be resisted.

3.2 In conservation areas and on listed buildings, well designed wooden, hand painted hanging or projecting signs may be permitted where considered appropriate. The Borough Council may consider the use of external illumination, such as spot lit, where this can be provided unobtrusively.



This amount and type of signage is unacceptable upon listed buildings and within conservation areas.

Amenity & Highway Considerations

4.0 Government places a duty on the Borough Council to consider all applications for new signage in relation to their impact upon amenity and highway safety.

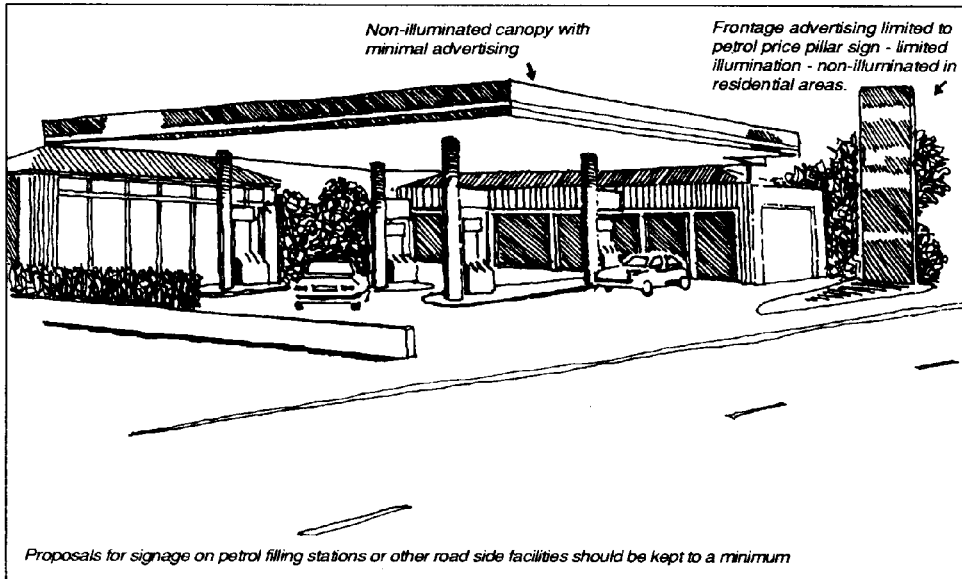
4.1 The Borough Council will not normally permit advertisements outside town centres, particularly in sensitive areas such as residential areas and open countryside.

4.2 Signs are not permitted adjacent to major highways or at junctions where they may be a distraction to motorists.

4.3 Proposals for signage on petrol filling stations or other road side facilities should be kept to a minimum in order to avoid impact upon the landscape, residential amenity or highway safety. The Borough Council will not normally permit illuminated fascias to filling station canopies outside the commercial centres of the Borough's towns.

4.4 Projecting signage should be kept above the level where they will not be hit by high passing vehicles (but see para. 2.1).

4.5 The intensity of illuminated signage should not be too bright and should be appropriate to the area. The Borough Council will impose planning conditions to guide the intensity of illumination depending on its location.



General

5.0 All advertisements, signs and fascias sited upon commercial premises are to be maintained in a clean, tidy and safe condition.

5.1 All express consents for advertisements will expire after five years. In certain circumstances the Borough Council may wish to grant consent for a shorter period.

5.2 Existing consents will not necessarily be renewed for a further period after the expiry of five years unless it can be demonstrated that the scheme complies with the policies set out above.

see list of contacts below

For further planning advice please contact:

Planning Services, Swale house, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT; (advice is also available on the planning pages of website at www.swale.gov.uk)

Email us on planning@swale.gov.uk or Fax us on 01795 417417

The Duty officer is: available:

8.45 to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45 am to 4.30 pm on Friday.

Contactable either in person at Swale House or by telephoning **01795 417442** and can

- Give advice on procedures and processes
- Answer general questions and Comment on development potential
- Give general advice on who to contact and how best to seek pre-application advice.

Swale's Conservation Officer - telephone 01795 417375

For Building Regulation advice please contact:

South Thames Gateway Building Control Partnership,
Compass Centre, Chatham Maritime, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4YH

Telephone 01634 331133

Fax 01634 331299

Email building@stqbc.org.uk

If you would like further information, more copies or alternative versions (i.e large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact:

Customer Services

Phone: **01795 417850**

Email: csc@swale.gov.uk

This booklet is one of a number of planning and development guidelines published by the Development Services Department of Swale Borough Council. Others include:

1. ● *The Conversion of Buildings into Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation.*
2. ● *Listed Buildings - A Guide for Owners and Occupiers.*
3. ● *The Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings.*
4. ● *The Design of Shopfronts, Signs and Advertisements.*
5. ● *Designing an Extension - A Guide for Householders.*
6. ● *Planting on New Developments - A Guide for Developers.*
7. ● *The Erection of Stables and Keeping of Horses.*
8. ● *Conservation Areas.*

Others may be published from time to time. Should you wish to obtain any of the above then please contact:

Swale Borough Council. Development Services Department,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne,
Kent. ME10 3HT. ☎ (0795) 417344.