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APPENDIX 3: Shop fronts, including ATMs

Shop fronts and ATMs

1. Shop fronts, advertisements and ATMs play a key role in parts of the public realm as they contribute to the character and appearance of the street-scene as well as attracting customers. This section provides specific guidance and is also applicable to other uses such as: banks; estate agents; restaurants; public houses; and other food and drink establishments, etc. Developments should give particular consideration to the robustness of materials and design detailing when considering development of shopfronts.
2. If a shop front is installed, altered, or replaced planning permission will generally be required and may also need separate Advertisement Consent.
3. Shop fronts should not be designed in isolation, but considered as part of the architectural composition of the building. The character of an area should be respected and care needs to be taken to ensure that standard designs are not imposed on areas with distinct architectural, historic or social character. The LPAs will expect corporate styles and branding to be adapted and modified to suit each particular location and will refuse proposals which seek to impose standard, corporate solutions at the expense of distinctive local characteristics.
4. Where existing shop fronts are a distinctive and original element of the building, the LPAs encourage them to be retained, or replicated, using good quality materials.
5. Shop fronts are commonly made up of several different components and it is important to ensure these they work together and are in proportion with the scale and architectural style of the building:

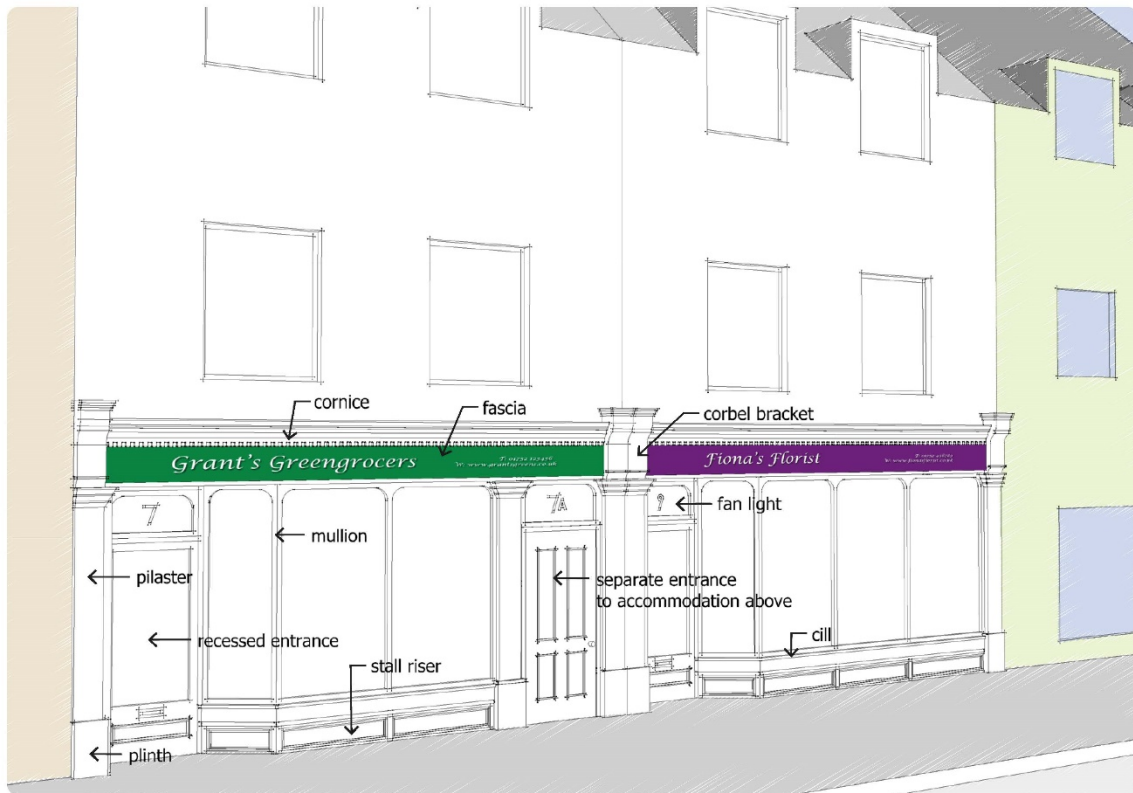


Figure 1: Traditional shop front elements

Fascia and pilasters

6. The fascia of a shop front provides the backdrop for the shop sign, and the pilasters define the shop width and support the upper floors.
7. The design of a fascia needs to be sympathetic to the shop front and building. If oversized, the fascia will unbalance the elevation composition of the shop front. There should be a visual gap between the top of the fascia and the window sills above:

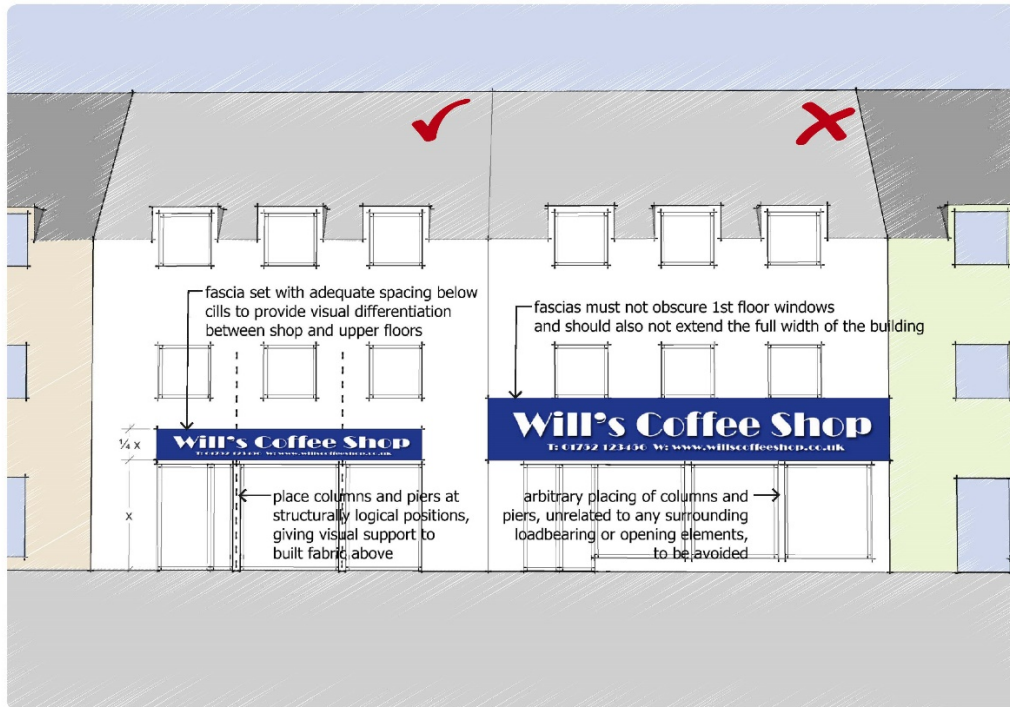


Figure 2: Modern shop fronts showing good and poor examples of shop front design

8. Where the existing shop front would be considered unacceptable according to the above guidelines, the replacement design will be expected to rectify the shop front.
9. Where there is a false ceiling inside a shop, it will not be acceptable to increase the height of the fascia in line with this. The change in level can be dealt with through careful detailing of the shop window itself, for example through transom lights with opaque glass or by setting the false ceiling back within the shop:

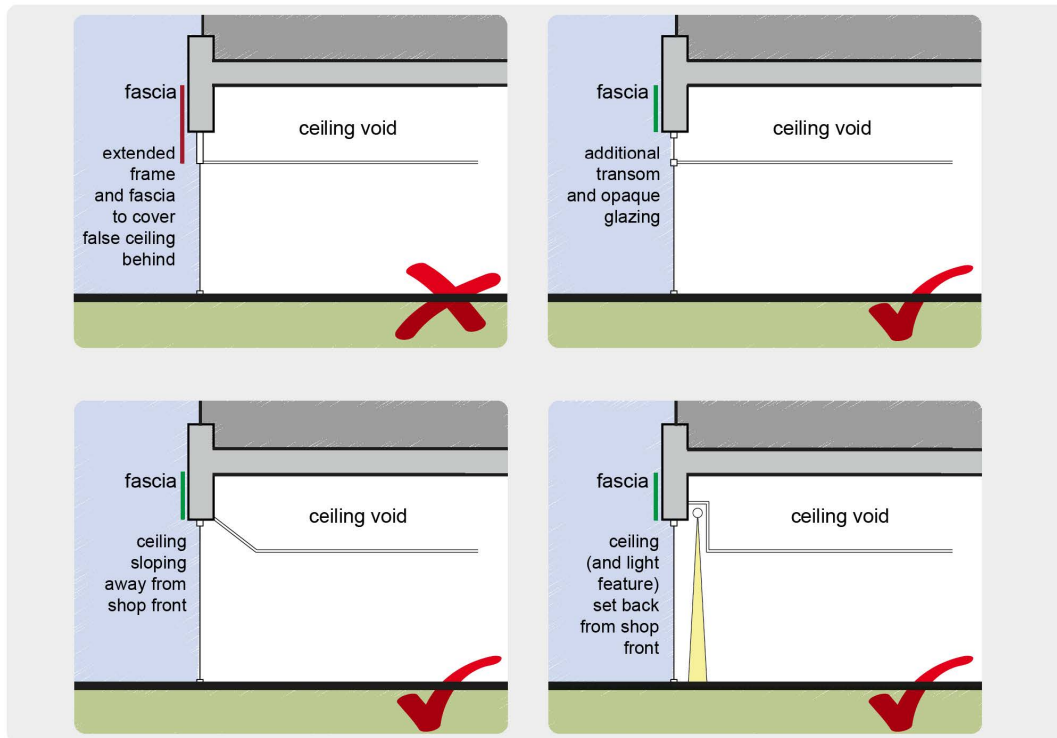


Figure 3: How to design a false ceiling without increasing fascia depth

Cornice

10. The cornice is a horizontal molding featured in some traditional shop fronts. It serves a practical purpose and also provides a visual break between the shop front and the upper floors. A cornice may be applied to a modern building and can be useful in providing an upper frame to the fascia and shop sign. Fascia signs should not obscure a cornice when it is a feature of the building and/or the street frontage.

Stall riser

11. The stall riser anchors the shop front to the ground. Shop fronts with no stall riser may appear top heavy. The design of the stall riser should reflect the character of the area. Where there is a common height or material used, this should be replicated and/or preserved.

Windows and displays

12. Interior signage that can be seen from the highway may require permission. The LPAs will encourage traders to ensure window displays assist in an attractive street-scene, even if the shop does not have goods to display. The appearance of above-ground windows should also be given attention, where windows serve as storage areas traders should consider introducing display windows or obscuring windows so that storage is not visible.

13. Window displays fronting highways should not endanger public safety.

- 14. The method of subdivision of windows should reflect the scale and style of the building. In general, there is more subdivision in traditional shop fronts than modern shop fronts.
- 15. A shop front design should ensure that activities within the property can be seen through a substantial proportion of clear glazed windows to enliven the street scene and promote natural surveillance, although it is acceptable for part of the shop front to include a window display area.
- 16. A minimum of two thirds of the shop front should be clear glazed to provide an active frontage (as illustrated below). However, each proposal will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the prominence of the shop front, its position in the street, the amount of existing ground floor frontage in the area, and the width of the shop front.



Figure 4: Shop front with active ground floor

- 17. A planning condition may be attached to require the ground floor commercial windows, or specified windows, to remain as active windows or window displays unobscured by the addition of vinyl or any other obstruction which restricts the visual transparency into and out of the window.

18. High quality materials and finishes are required for all shop fronts. In designing a shop front, consideration should be given to:
- The sustainability and longevity of materials;
 - Their appropriateness to the character of the area and building;
 - Visual relationship with the upper floor and adjacent buildings (particularly if part of a terrace).

Doors

19. Shop front doors and entrances should meet the specified Building Regulation standards for accessibility: [Access to and use of buildings: Approved Document M¹](#). Doors must not open over the highway. Recessed entrances that create opportunities for antisocial behavior outside of opening hours should be avoided.
20. In the case of a long shop front, such as for a department store, frequent openings should be provided to keep a vibrant, lively shop frontage.
21. In conservation areas and/or on listed buildings, door furniture (handles, hinges, design) should be appropriate to the character of the door, shop front, building and context.
22. For further guidance on the historic environment please see Section 6. For guidance on historic shop fronts please see below.

Blinds and canopies

23. Blinds or canopies can be useful in protecting goods from direct sunlight, as well as providing shade and shelter to shoppers. They should be designed as an integral part of the shop front and relate satisfactorily to the features of a building and the character of the area and street-scene in both open and retracted state.
24. The following guidelines for blinds and canopies should be followed:
- A blind/canopy should cover the full width of the shop front between pilasters;
 - A blind/canopy should be made of canvas or similar non-reflective material unless a solid canopy is considered part of the architectural design;
 - In sensitive locations such as conservation areas traditional awning type designs are usually more appropriate than curved 'Dutch' blinds;
 - A blind/canopy should sit beneath fascia level and constructed so that when fully open it will not cause obstruction to passers-by;
 - Where a blind or canopy overhangs the public highway, it should have a minimum clearance of 2.4m;

¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m>

- Whether modern or traditional, the blind box must be incorporated into the shop design and not simply applied;
- Fixed 'Dutch' blinds, the use of plastic and blinds over upper storey windows, basement windows or over doors alone will not normally be acceptable as they can look unattractive and permanently obscure the shop front; and,
- Any lettering/design on the canopy/blinds should not be allowed to dominate it and the style should relate to the design of the whole shop front, especially the fascia sign.

26. Where a shop front blind or canopy overhangs a public highway a licence will be required under the Highways Act.

ATMs and security

27. The installation of a cash machine (ATM) should be considered as an integral part of the design of the shop front, using materials that are sympathetic to the building. It should be well-lit and positioned where there is a sufficient degree of natural surveillance and where users will not impede pedestrian movement. Where cash machines are designed into the facade, only a maximum of one third of the width of the shop front will be permitted to ensure an active frontage, natural surveillance, and to reduce the impact on the visual amenity of the street-scene.

28. Careful thought must be given to the need, design and siting of alarms and CCTV systems, specifically avoiding being sited on architectural features such as pilasters or decorative moldings.

29. In order to maintain active frontages and street-scenes outside of business hours, security should be sensitively designed to ensure minimal visual impact and should be integrated into the design of shop fronts at the outset. Planning permission is unlikely to be granted for external solid or perforated metal shutters and grilles as they present a blank frontage to the street and can be subject to graffiti and vandalism. The following alternative means of security are recommended (in order of preference):

- Security glass/glazing – this is usually laminated with the capacity to remain intact, even when broken;
- Internal shutter grilles – these can be fitted discreetly behind the shop window and are retractable. These should be open mesh if feasible;
- External open mesh grilles – these would be subject to planning and should be incorporated in the shop front design and building. Where possible it should only cover the glazed areas and not the whole shop front. The window display must still be visible and the housing box should be integrated within the shop front (recessed or flushed with the façade).

Historic shop fronts

30. Shop fronts of listed buildings, in conservation areas, or in other areas with historic character, need to respect the historic setting and it is recommended that this section is read in alongside guidance in Section 6.
31. The height of the fascia should be in proportion to the width of the pilasters and sit below the cornice. Above the pilasters, corbel brackets should be used to frame the fascia and support the cornice.
32. Large undivided areas of glass are not considered in-keeping with traditional shop fronts, and should be avoided. Vertical divisions with mullions, and in some cases horizontal divisions with a transom (a horizontal beam that separates the door from the fanlight or window above it) may be supported.
33. Over-lights are often placed above the door and in some cases the doors are set back from the shop windows. If a setback is needed in a new doorway, this should be no more than 1.5 meters in depth, incorporating sensitive lighting.
34. Traditional fittings should be considered.
35. If historic blinds/awnings (traditionally made of canvas) or a blind box exists then consideration should be given to repairing these or reinstatement.
36. Materials and finishes should be in keeping with the historic character of the building and area. The use of uPVC will not be acceptable on shop fronts of listed buildings, or in conservation areas.

Plymouth City Centre shop fronts

37. The guidance in this section is for Plymouth City Centre only and is in addition to the guidance set out in this appendix. All proposals will also be considered in the context of additional guidance contained within the Plymouth City Centre Masterplan and within the context of the City Centre's conservation area status.
38. Within the conservation area, the LPA will aim to restore and reveal original shopfronts which complement the centre's conservation area status.
39. Stall risers should be designed to take account of floor levels and form a suitable plinth to the shop front, but should not be excessively large. The use of natural stone such as granite, local limestone, Portland Stone or local slate should be used to create a high quality, sustainable, and long-lasting, stall riser. Other materials, such as high quality metal, will be considered if it can be demonstrated that they relate well to the wider building and to the composition of the shop front as a whole.

40. In many instances fascia and pilasters form part of the original building design are finished in stone. Where possible these original features should be retained. New windows should be inserted within the openings framed by the original fascia and pilasters.
41. The area between the top of the stall riser and bottom of the original fascia must have an overall appearance that is 'light-weight'. This should be achieved by:
- Maximising the height of the display windows or glazing;
 - Avoiding the installation of box fascias;
 - Using clerestories (high-level windows) of clear/translucent/obscure glazing or other light-weight treatments to minimise the extent of solid in the frontage; and,
 - Framing elements (glazing bars, door frames, etc.) should form an integral part of the structure of the shop front employing high quality materials. The extent of framing should be minimised to ensure that shop fronts are of a suitable scale.
42. Materials appropriate for framing include metals such as bronze, or stainless steel, or contemporary style timber. Plastic framing will generally not create an appropriate finish.
43. Many buildings have solid canopies between the ground and first floor. These are part of the original building design and provide important shelter. Within solid canopies roller blind boxes for canvas awnings are housed. The use of traditional roller blinds in these positions is acceptable. Where traditional-style canvas awnings are proposed in other locations, the LPA will have regard to the individual characteristics of the building.