

SHOPFRONTS

DESIGN GUIDE

The City of Carlisle is fortunate in having a legacy of fine Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts which greatly enhance the character and appearance of the towns and villages in the district.

Unfortunately this heritage is constantly under threat from inappropriate piecemeal change.

In order to install or alter a shopfront it will normally be necessary to obtain planning permission. The purpose of this guide is to assist the development control process by encouraging designers to take a more sensitive approach to the design of new or the alteration of existing shopfronts by providing policy and design guidance at the pre-application stage.

The advice given applies to all commercial premises which have a display window and/or fascia sign. It therefore includes banks, public houses etc.

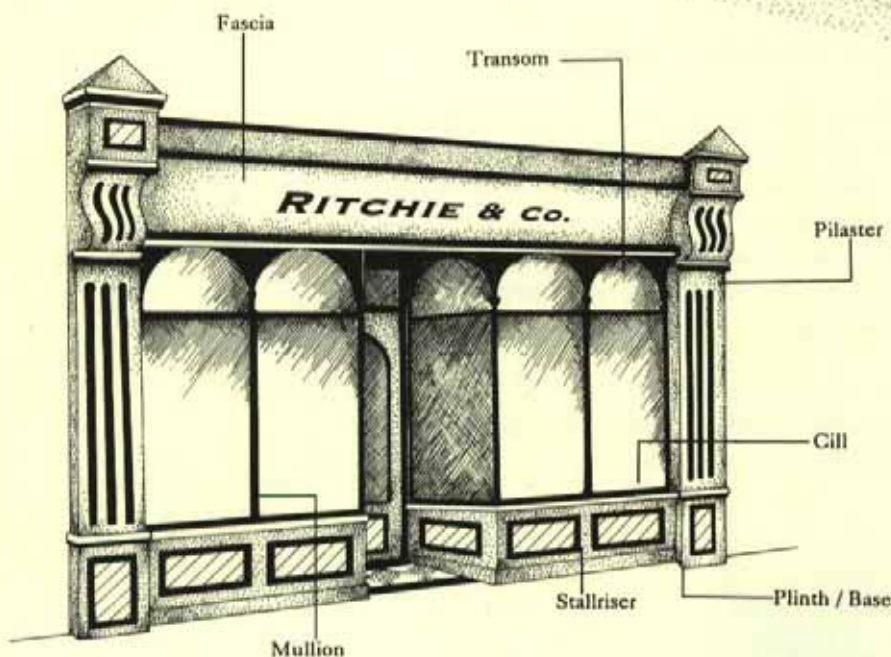


Shop Fronts in Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Many of the older shops throughout the City and surrounding villages are located within conservation areas and may also form part of a listed building. Where this is the case it will be necessary to obtain listed building consent to alter a listed shopfront, including the installation of security measures and conservation area consent to demolish a shopfront within a conservation area.

All new shopfronts, but particularly those in conservation areas and listed buildings should blend into and enhance the character of the street. This is achieved by complementing the existing proportions, character, style and scale of the buildings in the area. Of equal importance is the careful selection of materials, colours, lettering and detailing for the shopfront.

It is likely that multiple traders will need to modify their corporate identity to some extent in order to blend with the character of an area.



Good Shopfront Design

Many existing shopfronts for which alterations or replacement are proposed, form an essential part of a street's character and their loss or drastic change would be detrimental to the amenity of the area. Therefore the City Council will encourage the retention of such shopfronts. Often the cheapest solution is to retain and refurbish what is already there.

In other instances the City Council will favour the replacement of incongruous shopfronts with a more appropriate design, where this will benefit the appearance of an area. It is not suggested that designers should slavishly try to recreate the past by pastiche and facsimile. Therefore where appropriate the City Council will encourage good contemporary designs.

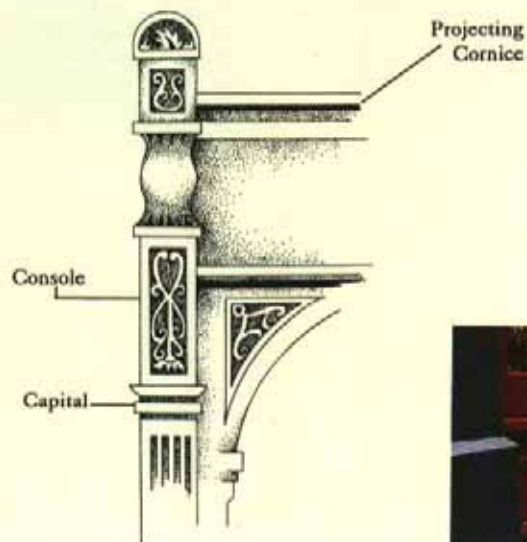
The following details set out the criteria by which the City Council will judge the acceptability of proposals for new or altered shopfronts.

Elements of a Shopfront

The main elements of a traditional shopfront are the pilasters, consoles or corbels, cornice, fascia, stallrisers and glazing bars. Each of these elements has a practical purpose as well as contributing to the character of the building. For example:

- the pilasters distinguish one shop from another
- the console allows the fascia to be installed at an angle more easily visible from street level
- the fascia provides space to display the name of the shop
- the projecting cornice defines the top of the shop front and it distinguishes the shop from the rest of the building
- the stallriser protects the bottom of the shopfront and provides for ventilation.

The most aesthetically successful shop fronts in historic buildings comprise most or all of these elements constructed from natural materials and sensitively proportioned.





Fascia

Most traditional fascias do not exceed 400mm in depth. The scale and design should be in proportion to the design of the shopfront and the height of the building as a whole.

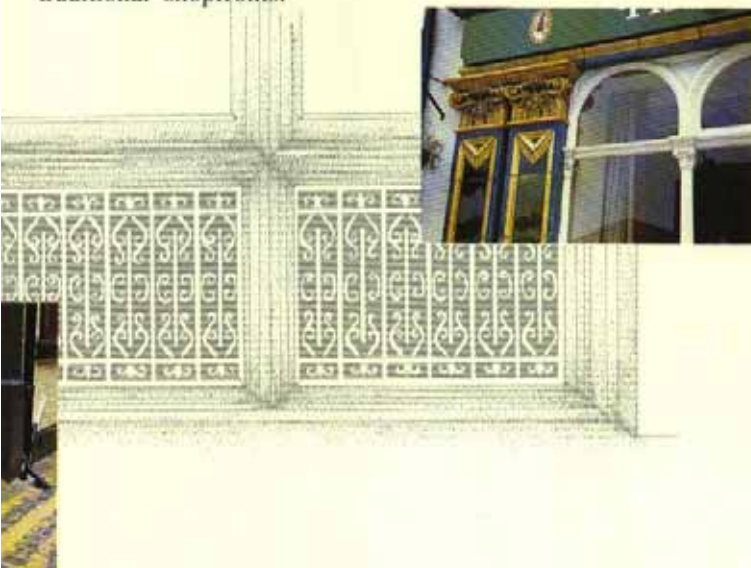
Fascias should not obscure any existing architectural detail and should normally be stopped off by a cornice or blindbox. The fascia should always be below the level of the first floor window sills and should never extend uninterrupted across a number of distinct architectural units.

Modern factory made box fascias, which are made from plastic or metal, project from the existing fascia panel and are normally internally illuminated are considered to be too large, bulky and inappropriate for most styles of buildings in Carlisle.

In situations where it is necessary to cover a suspended ceiling the ceiling should be set back by at least 1 metre thereby avoiding the need to use a deep fascia.

Colour

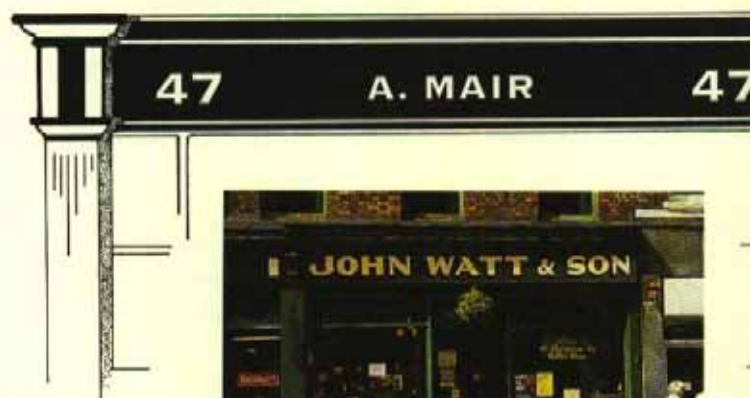
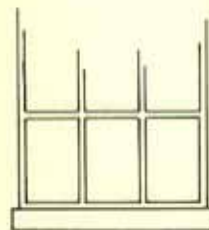
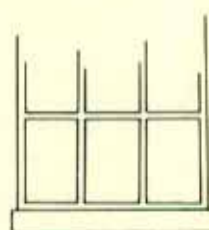
Colour schemes should harmonise with the remainder of the building and with other buildings in the street. Strident or garish colours should be avoided. It is preferable that timber is painted rather than stained. The use of gold leaf will be encouraged on traditional shopfronts.



Materials

Much of the character of the historic street-scape is derived from the appearance of traditional materials such as brick, stone, tile, slate and timber. Modern materials such as plastic, perspex, aluminium and stainless steel, unless sensitively integrated by competent design, are unsuitable for historic buildings and rarely blend into the historic street.

Designers will be required to take account of the existing materials of the building above and of the street in general. In all but exceptional circumstances highly polished materials such as marble, granite and glazed tiles will not be acceptable.



Signwriting

Traditionally fascia signs were either hand painted or had individually applied lettering. The lettering should be part of the architectural detail of the building and should relate well to the building facade and not be obtrusive in relation to the general street-scape. The purpose of the sign is to be reasonably legible to pedestrians.

Stallrisers

The stallriser was originally part of the display table when shopfronts were completely open. Visually it forms a solid base for the building and varies between 300-500mm in depth.

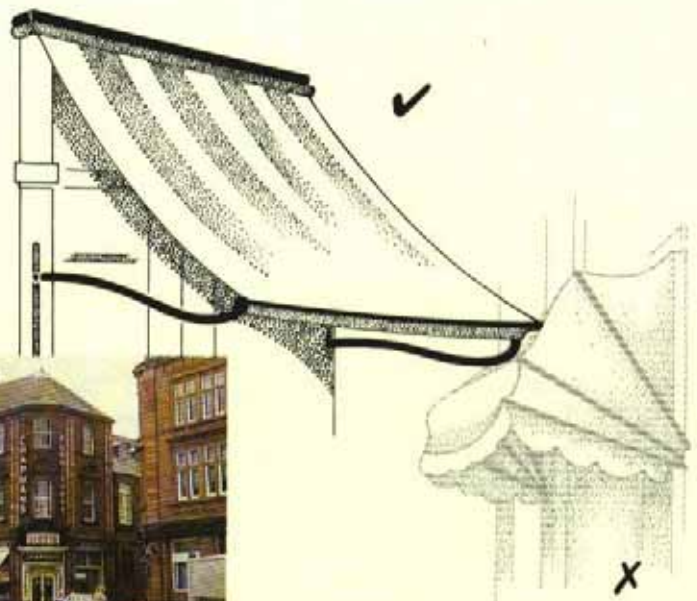
Existing stallrisers, particularly those with decorative features such as Victorian tiles should be retained.

A stallriser should be constructed from materials to match those of the building above it and will usually be timber panelling, brick or stone.

Canopies

Awnings and blinds can add to the attractiveness of the shopfront. They should be fully retractable with the blind box carefully designed as part of the cornice or fascia. The colour of fabric and presence of advertising will be important considerations in determining the acceptability of the blind.

Dutch blinds which are made of shiny plastic, fixed in position and carrying some form of advertising will not be permitted.



Hanging Signs

The City Council will encourage the use of small signs made from timber or ironwork and hung from a decorative bracket. They should be positioned between the top of the fascia and the first floor window sills. No more than one hanging or projecting sign per building will be permitted.

The City Council will not be in favour of the fixing of bulky steel box frames containing acrylic panels with internal illumination to historic buildings.

Public houses are slightly different in that more than one wall sign may be permitted.

Illumination

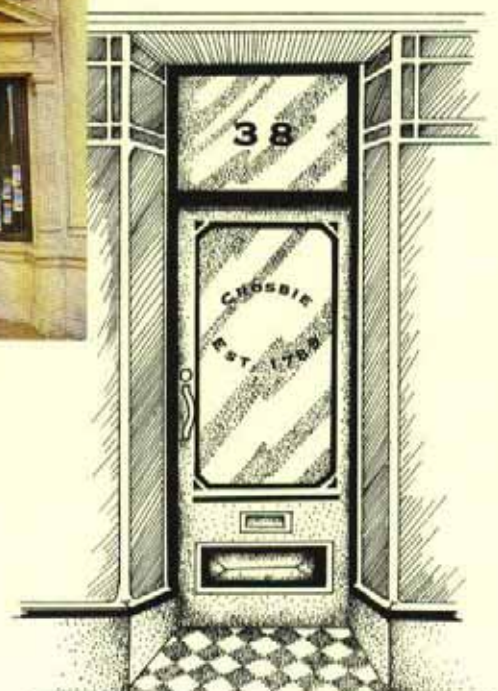
In most cases external illumination of shopfronts is unnecessary within Carlisle as most shops are located within brightly lit streets.

Where illumination is considered necessary the lights should be discreetly hidden on suitable parts of the building. Internally illuminated box fascias, projecting spotlights and fluorescent lighting will not normally be permitted in conservation areas as they are considered to be visually obtrusive and spoil the character of historic buildings and streets.

Doors and Windows

On many traditional shop fronts, the entrance is recessed. It's position should be determined by the overall scale and design of the building. A solid panel at the base of the door to coincide with the stallriser is appropriate. Applicants should check with the City Council's Building Control Section for further advice on entrance doors.

Glazing to traditional shop fronts should be subdivided by mullions and in certain cases transoms. This subdivision should reflect the vertical divisions of the building above fascia level. Etched lettering and figures on doors, fanlights and clerestoreys may be acceptable in certain instances.



Security

The character of a shopfront can be dramatically altered by the installation of security measures such as roller shutters. The use of solid heavy shutters can make an area appear to be very hostile, particularly if several are installed very close together. The following guidance is intended to help shopkeepers protect their property whilst minimising the visual impact of these measures.

Laminated glass:

provides security without affecting the appearance of the property and is the first solution that should be considered. Small paned windows are less of a temptation to wilful damage than large sheets of plate glass, and are cheaper to replace. Shopkeepers are encouraged to add extra mullions to reduce the expanse of glass.

Internal security grilles:

are the next best solution. Fitted behind the glass, they roll into a box discreetly hidden behind the fascia. The open mesh of the grille provides for a better appearance to the street when the shop is closed.

Removable or demountable grilles:

require no bulky box housings and are generally acceptable providing fittings are concealed or painted to match the shop frame and do not damage architectural features.

External roller grilles:

may be acceptable providing the box housings, which are bulky and unattractive, are concealed behind the fascia or are incorporated flush beneath it. Where exposed, the boxes should be colour finished to match the shopfront, as should the grille and all associated components.

The impact of solid shutters can be unattractive and intrusive. They are generally unacceptable, particularly in Conservation Areas and main shopping streets.

Burglar alarms should be carefully positioned on the fascia and painted to match the shopfront.

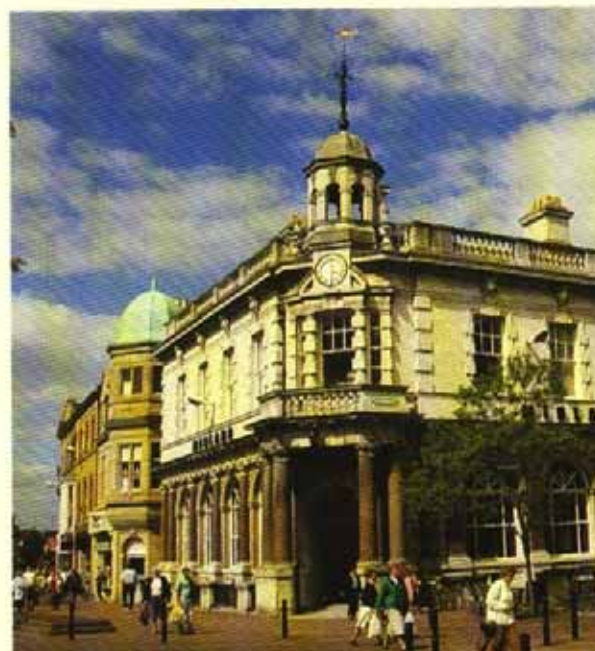
Access for All

Shops are perhaps the most used of all "public" buildings. It is therefore extremely important that **everyone** has equal access. By the very nature of their purpose, shops need to be accessible to all, with as little difficulty as possible. A shop entrance should not present a barrier to any disability, whether physical or sensory, temporary or permanent. Parents with pushchairs and young children, people carrying heavy bags and elderly people, although not disabled in the strict sense, can find entering certain shops very difficult. Advice and design guidance can be obtained from the council's Access Officer on (01228) 23411 extension 3028.

Local Plan Proposals

The district is covered by two adopted local plans. The Carlisle Urban Area Local Plan covers the urban area of the City with the remainder covered by the Rural Area Local Plan. A District Local Plan which combines and rolls forward these two Plans to 2006 is being prepared and retains previous Shopfront proposals. Anyone considering altering or installing a shop front should refer to the proposals contained in the Environment sections of these plans.

The plans may be viewed by calling at the Planning Services reception, 7th Floor, Civic Centre, Carlisle. Further advice may be obtained from the Local Plans Section on (01228) 23411 extension 2255.



Further Enquiries

Advice on the need for planning permission, building regulation control, advertisement control, listed building and conservation area consent may be obtained from the Planning Services Division, Civic Centre, Carlisle, CA3 8QG (01228) 23411. Advice on Grant aid for historic buildings repair can be obtained from the Conservation Section (extension 2529) of the Planning Services Division at the address above.

Conclusion

Where a shopfront forms part of a listed building and is itself an historic element of that building, or is located within a conservation area, the City Council will be in favour of the retention and repair of that shopfront. Grant assistance may be available for any repair works undertaken.

Where an original shopfront has been altered and original detailing lost the City Council will be in favour of the reinstatement of these details using traditional materials. Again grant assistance may be available for those shops which are listed or within conservation areas.

Where a replacement of a poorly designed modern shopfront in an historic building is proposed, the City Council will favour designs which are contemporary in material and detail with the host building.

While the advice contained in this leaflet relates specifically to listed buildings and historic buildings in conservation areas, it also applies generally to shopfronts in modern buildings, particularly those located within conservation areas. Designers should therefore seek to incorporate modern interpretations of the main elements of a traditional shopfront into their proposals.

Above all it is recommended that designers contact the Development Control and Conservation Sections to discuss proposals prior to the submission of applications.



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