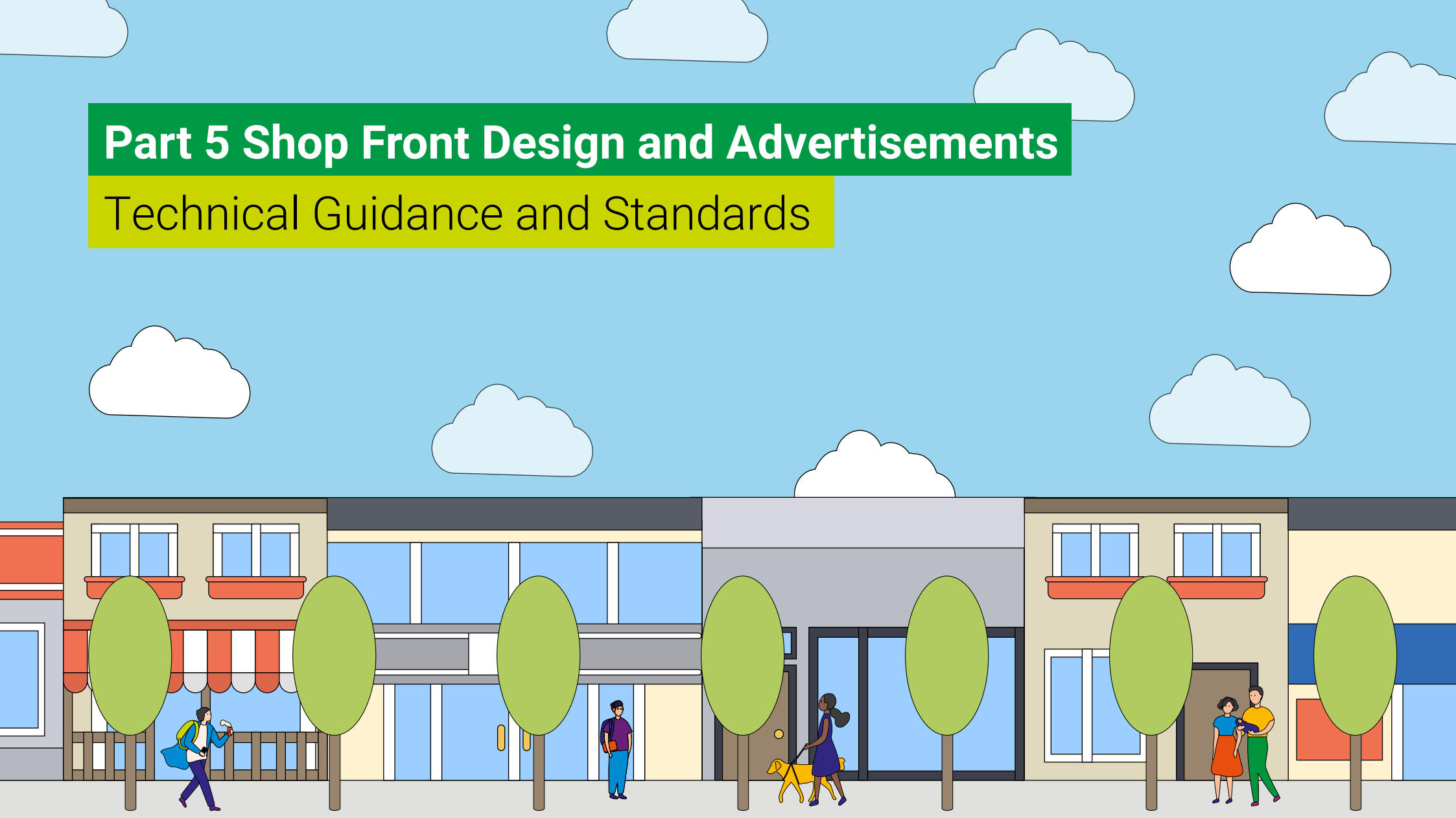


Part 5 Shop Front Design and Advertisements

Technical Guidance and Standards

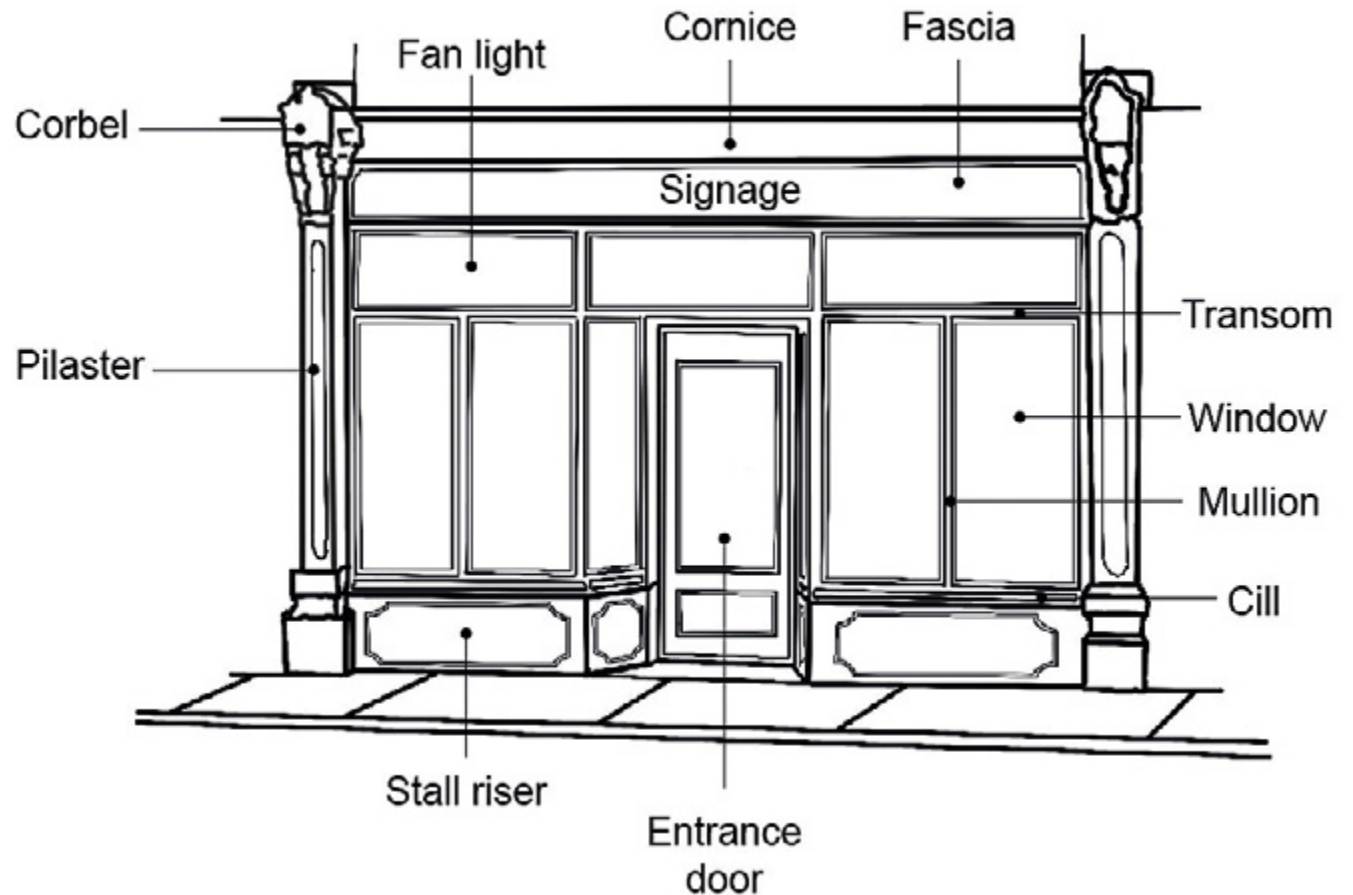


Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The function of the shop front

Shop fronts serve a variety of functions, primarily they allow light into the ground floor of the building and provide an area for the display of goods. They also provide visual and physical support for the upper floor(s) of a building. The design principles set out in this section are equally applicable to restaurants, bars, public houses, clubs, and other buildings with uses containing a shop like frontage and/or signage.

Shop fronts are composed of several elements; all of which have important practical and visual functions. Some elements are prevalent within both traditional and modern shop frontages and the following section explains the various components and how they may be considered when designing an appropriate shop front. It is envisaged that through considering these aspects the design of shop fronts can be enhanced and enrich our shopping environment whilst still satisfying the requirements of retailers and traders. There are also several different types of advertisements, which are also included below



Guidance for elements of a shop front

Fascias

The fascia is a key component of any shop front. It is generally one of the more prominent areas of a shop front as it normally displays the shop advertisement, drawing attention of the shopper to the services on offer. It also helps to distinguish the shop from the upper floors of the building.

A traditional fascia advertisement typically comprised a painted timber board with signwriting or applied individual letters in wood or metal. Whether you are designing a traditional or modern shop front the following points in relation to size and siting of fascias should be observed;

- The original or existing fascia areas should not be increased in height to accommodate any new signage, nor should any signage boards protrude above or below this line. In cases where signage has already been increased beyond the original fascia and is considered to be disproportionate, a reduction in size may be sought.
- The size of the fascia must be in proportion to the rest of the shop front and the whole building, so that it is not too dominant. Fascia boards generally should not exceed one fifth of the total height of the shop front.
- The top of a fascia should be positioned well below the sill of the first-floor windows.
- The fascia should not obscure any existing architectural features or decoration
- The fascia should form an integral part of the design of the shop front surround, rather than be a separate board superimposed upon the building.
- The fascia should not extend across two or more individual shop fronts. On traditional frontages or distinctive buildings, they should not extend beyond the shop front surround (demarcated by the pilasters or uprights at the outer edges of the shop front).

Windows and doors

Windows, glazing bars, mullion bars, transoms should be designed to be in proportion with the shop, the shop front and the rest of the building. They should reflect the design and architectural style of the building. The number of windows and division of the shop front should also relate well to the upper floors of the property.

Doorways

The location, size and style of the door and doorway should reflect the proportion and character of a building. More ornate buildings may require appropriate doorways and entrances that need to include additional features such as recessed doorways and transom window.

Every opportunity must be taken to make sure access to and within a property is accessible for all members of the public, including those with mobility or sight difficulties. Highlighting entrance steps, overhanging edges and avoiding open risers, all assist where entrance steps are unavoidable. Recessing doorways can also assist in removing the need to incorporate steps and ramps.

Hanging Sign

Hanging and projecting signs are normally used to help identify a shop from longer distances. The sign must be of an appropriate scale and be designed to enhance the character of the building and street. The style of any supporting brackets should also reflect the character of the building.



Box Sign

Surface mounted box signs are normally attached to the front of fascias and tend to include some form of illumination. They tend to project from the fascia and any detailing i.e. pilasters, cornices, and corbels.

Where box signs are proposed, they should be recessed into the fascia wherever possible. Where this is not possible, alternative solutions, such as a slimline box or flat panel, may be appropriate. However, this will depend entirely on the overall design of the building and shop front and the signs visual impact on the street scene.



Illumination

Good illumination can help to create more attractive and vibrant environments, particularly when done in a sensitive and coordinated manner. In some instances, this may involve internal illumination of a shop window or by externally illuminating a shop frontage. Not only can this help to create a safer atmosphere after hours but also offer views into shops for natural surveillance and the display of products.

Where illuminated signage is proposed, the luminance levels of any signage and shop frontages should take account advice set out in the Institute of Lighting Professionals Technical Guidance Note No 5 and to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Shop security

Crime and the fear of both crime and anti-social behaviour have created a high demand for security measures within shop frontages. The use of security measures should be considered as part of the initial design stage of any new shop front. They should ensure that they do not detract from the vibrancy of the street scene and where possible enhance it. The following section sets out a number of measures to consider

Shatterproof, toughened laminated glass

This is the least obtrusive measure to protect shop fronts, it maintains an excellent degree of security to a shop frontage, including natural surveillance, without having any impact on its external appearance.

Internal shutters and grilles

Internal shutters and grilles generally sit behind the shop windows or display area and come in a variety of forms and styles. The advantage of this type of shop security is that they also maintain the external appearance of the shop front.

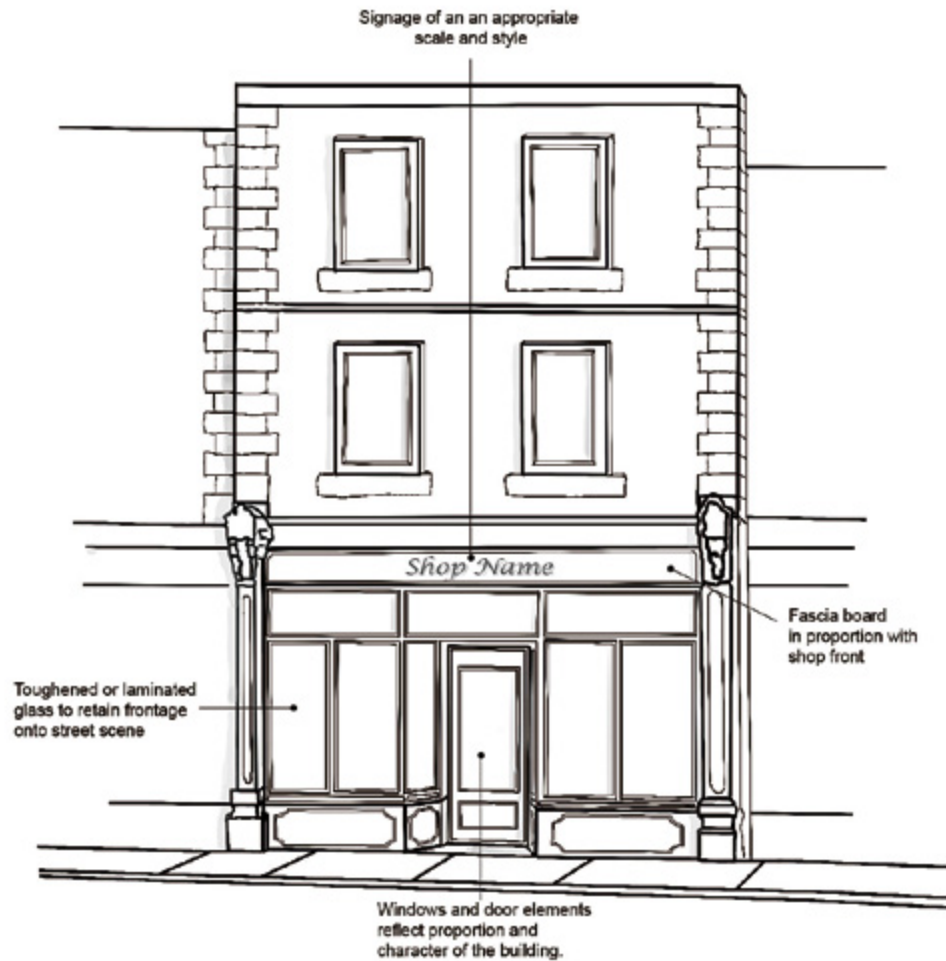
Decorative external grilles

These offer similar advantages to internal security shutters in that the external appearance of the shop front is often maintained. Well-designed external grilles can also help to enhance the appearance of shop front, typically they will not cover the pilasters. Also, they should generally be designed to be removed or to fold away when not in use.

Roller shutters and external grilles

Roller shutters and external grilles often result in visual harm to the building, the street scene and the character of an area, particularly when premises are closed. The negative visual and environmental consequences arising from the use of inappropriate security measures (either individually or cumulatively) is that they create dead frontages and sterilise the environment giving the feeling of a fear of crime and sense of loneliness. When considering the installation of security measures it may be helpful to think about the following key principles;

- Each building needs to be treated and designed individually.
- Grilles and shutter should only cover the glazed elements of the shop front.
- The shutter box should not protrude from the fascia or beyond other architectural features
- Perforated, punched or polycarbonate shutters are considered preferable to solid shutter design



Other types of advertisements

Free Standing

The use of freestanding or A-boards placed on the public highway will generally not be permitted as they can provide a cluttered and unattractive appearance as well as cause obstructions. The Council may, however, consider the provision of a shared advertisement display for surrounding businesses if this can be sited in a suitable location and is of an appropriate design. As well as advertisement consent, a license will be required from the Council in order to allow the use of the public highway for advertisement purposes.

Totem signs

These are generally taller signs that display of information such a company name, store opening times and any services available. Typically, they are seen as a way of attracting passing motorists and are commonplace for supermarkets, restaurants and petrol stations that lie next to major roads.

In these types of locations, they are likely to be acceptable subject to being of an appropriate height. Typically, a height of 4m is considered to be more than adequate but each case will need to be assessed on its own merits and such a height may not always be considered acceptable. In more sensitive locations such as residential areas, high streets/shopping parades, and conservation areas they are unlikely to be considered acceptable.



Advertisement hoardings

The Council recognises that advertisement hoardings are an established way of advertising for a variety of purposes. Advertisement hoardings are typically large structures that generally have a significant visual impact. New proposals for advertisement hoardings that require advertisement consent should be appropriate in scale to their surroundings and will not be supported where they cause harmful visual impact or harm public safety.

Exceptions in more sensitive locations, such as open countryside and conservation areas, may be allowed where they are for a temporary period to advertise key regeneration projects or housing developments. Where advertisement hoardings are allowed, applicants may be expected to provide landscaping details in order to minimise any impact. Any landscaping will need to be maintained by the applicant unless an appropriate commuted sum is paid to the Council for maintenance purposes.



Advertisement Banners

Advertisement Banners can come in a variety of sizes and are often made to each individual client's specification. Typically, they are for temporary periods and used to draw the public's attention to a new developments/works, retail sales and/or special events. However, like advertisement hoardings, they can often be visually intrusive and need to be sensitively located.

Generally, the use of advertisement banners will not be supported, except where banner advertisements are for temporary periods to draw attention to specific events or activities taking place across the borough. The siting of advertisement banners upon listed buildings will however be strongly resisted. In order to ensure that public and highway safety is safeguarded there is a legal requirement to ensure that all banner signs are securely fixed

Directional signage

These signs will highlight the location of particular services where businesses will be located off main routes. They should be small in scale and contain limited information. Careful consideration should be given to their location and they will generally only be allowed in exceptional circumstances to avoid a cluttering impact on the street scene. They will only be supported in isolated or rural locations where they are sensitively designed in terms of their number, location, size and colour and do not either individually or cumulatively, harm the character of the surrounding countryside.

Flagpoles

Flagpoles and associated advertisements are becoming increasingly popular on commercial premises. Whilst they can often act as a feature or marker to a site entrance, they are often overused. Choosing the right location will often reduce the need for a greater number of flagpoles across a site.

The use of multiple flagpoles on a site will generally not be considered acceptable as this will typically give rise to a cluttering effect within the street scene. Where a number of flagpoles are proposed their proximity to one another should be severely limited, as this will again give rise to a cluttering effect within the street scene.



Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

Shop frontages and advertisements within conservation areas and upon listed buildings will need to be designed with care and be of a high quality.

The nature and style of buildings may vary from one property to another, and this is also true of the Borough's various conservation areas. Therefore, each shop front and advertisement may need to be designed individually.

Careful consideration should be given to reflect the character of an area and the proportions of a building. Some frontages may need to be simple in their detailing whilst others will be able to incorporate a more ornate approach. The approach to be taken will be informed by the nature, design and proportions of the property.

Signage will be required to be of an appropriate scale and style. Key to the success will be the use of appropriate materials, colours and illumination.

The use of individual lettering will be strongly encouraged and where a building is of considerable significance this may be insisted upon.

Designers should be prepared to compromise on matters of corporate design where it would not be in keeping with the listed building or conservation area. Where a sensitive approach to design is used it can help to re-establish a strong sense of place and reflect the identity of local surroundings.

The method of illumination within sensitive areas is an important consideration. Within these areas non-illuminated or externally illuminated signage is strongly encouraged.

The use of security measures in conservation areas and on listed buildings also needs careful consideration. The use of external grilles and roller shutters is unlikely to be considered acceptable and the most appropriate measures of shop security will include:

- The use of toughened or laminated glass
- Strengthening or shatterproof adhesive films
- Internal open grilles
- Use of, and/or reinforcement of stall risers

Pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority and the Historic Buildings Officer are encouraged to ensure that appropriate design solutions are considered.

