

Walsall

# Shop Front Supplementary Planning Document



Walsall Council

## **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Adoption Statement**

Part 5 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 is concerned with the production of Supplementary Planning Documents. It states under Regulation 11 the requisite constituent parts of an 'adoption statement', which shall be (a) the date of adoption, (b) any modifications made, (c) right to seek judicial review and (d) time limits to make an application for a review.

Title of SPD: Shop Fronts Supplementary Planning Document.

Subject: This SPD expands on "saved" policy ENV35 of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan regarding the appearance of commercial buildings.

Consultation: Consultation was undertaken between 15<sup>th</sup> September 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014

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The relevant documents can be inspected on the Council's website at [http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning\\_policy/local\\_development\\_framework/ldf\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_documents.htm](http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/planning_policy/local_development_framework/ldf_supplementary_planning_documents.htm) or during normal opening hours at the First Stop Shop in Walsall Civic Centre.

Useful contacts are provided at the end of the document.

Adoption: The SPD was adopted by Walsall Council at its Cabinet meeting on the 29 April 2015.

Modifications made: Pursuant to section 23(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the following modification are listed:

- **Policy SF5 - Access to shops:** Additional wording to include options for ramps and lifts to form part of the policy criteria.
- **Policy SF8 - Shop front security:** Additional wording to link the policy with the requirements of 'Secure By Design' via the 'Secure By Design' website.
- **Section 3.9 – Pavement cafés and street trading:** Additional wording to note the need to place 'A' board signs sensitively within the public realm with a pavement licence in place.
- **Section 3.10 – Addressing flood risk:** A new section setting out the need for Flood Risk Assessments and mitigation measures for new shop fronts in areas of medium and high flood risk (Flood Risk Level 2 and 3).

Any person with sufficient interest in the decision to adopt the supplementary planning document may apply to the High Court for permission to apply for judicial review of that decision, not later than 3 months after the date on which the supplementary planning document was adopted.

The 'Consultation Statement can be found at the end of the document.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Shop fronts play a significant role in the character of the boroughs town and district centres. These centres are where some of Walsall's most historic and well preserved townscapes survive and are often the destination for many of our commercial and leisure based trips.

The nature of retail and other associated commercial premises vary greatly, and the appearance of the shop front reflects the different uses, sizes of premises, styles of architecture and periods of construction.

Commerce is fickle, and the nature of retail and business has changed significantly over the past 50 years. Individual operators have diversified and whilst new operators have appeared others are disappearing or locating out of town. These changes have not suddenly happened, but have constituted a significant shift in retail patterns since the Second World War.

The advent of the shopping mall created a new flexible and modern face to shopping and this style of shopping found its way into the traditional high street, with older premises being refitted to reflect this new image. The town and district centres of Walsall are no different to any others in Britain and inherit this legacy of altered shop fronts that have largely harmed the character of these areas to varying degrees.

Today the struggle to sustain vibrant town centres is greater than ever

and retailers are competing with the greatest threat to date, that of online retail. This has resulted in a greater percentage of our centres comprising leisure based operators including food and drink premises and as a result changing further their character.

These changes to the economy of the town centres in conjunction with the modern turnover rate of operators and the pressures to market more aggressively has had a significantly negative impact on the character of these areas. There is now a need to reinforce planning policy to ensure that improvements can be made in controlling the design of new shop fronts whilst catering for the modern needs of retail practice.

Walsall has invested heavily in its town centres, in conjunction with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and has delivered new shop fronts in Walsall, Willenhall and Bloxwich town centres through a series of Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) programmes and Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes (HERS). The legacy of these initiatives must not be lost and therefore there is a very real need to introduce a further planning policy document to ensure this work continues with real effect.

This document celebrates the various THI projects, particularly the achievements of the most recent, that in Willenhall. It also sets out design principles for future shop fronts as proposals for new shop fronts come forwards.

It is important that future replacement shop fronts are not markedly different to those delivered through the THI as the value of this work must be seen as comprehensive improvements to the townscape, not projects in isolation.

The document is chiefly a visual guide and is aimed directly at the local community, developers and as a negotiation tool during the planning process.

Its focus is the composition of shop fronts, the needs of users, security, signage, materials and structural constraints. It provides illustrations and examples of how shop fronts work and how a good shop front can effectively promote business.

### **1.1 Role of the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is a planning document that supports the Development Plan. In Walsall, the Development Plan comprises the “saved” policies of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP), together with the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS).

This Shop Front SPD is intended to support UDP Policy ENV35 together with other policies of the UDP and CS as set out in Section 2.0 below.

This SPD provides detailed guidance that will assist owners, developers and investors to understand the design requirements of proposed new or adapted shop fronts.

The SPD will be a material consideration in the planning process and will carry weight in the decision making of planning application, advertisement consents and listed building consents.

This document supersedes the Design Guidance for Security Shutters adopted by the Council in 1998.

### **1.2 Where is the SPD applicable?**

The SPD will apply to any premises within the following classes of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended):

- A1: Shops;
- A2: Financial and professional services;
- A3: Restaurants and cafes;
- A4: Drinking establishments; and
- A5: Hot food take-aways.

It will apply throughout all the town and district centres across the borough and to all commercial aspects of the borough’s conservation areas. It will also address listed buildings in retail or associated commercial use.

### **1.3 The planning process**

#### *1.3.1 Planning permission*

Any alteration that will result in a material change to the external appearance of a shop front will normally require planning permission.



In determining a planning application, the local planning authority aims to address all material considerations through the 'planning balance'. This requires a value to be placed against various issues that may be in conflict to enable a decision to be made. This SPD will help identify the main considerations for design, use, access, advertisement, and security.

### 1.3.2 Advertisement Consent.

Most advertisements, including illuminated and certain other types of signage on shops, require Advertisement Consent. This is separate to planning permission and needs to be applied for when the signage/advertisements proposed are not classed as 'deemed consent'.

'Deemed consent' is currently set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 which have been in force since 6 April 2007.

The Department for Communities and Local Government produced guidance in June 2007. 'Outdoor advertisements and signs: a guide for advertisers' can be viewed at:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/11499/326679.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/11499/326679.pdf)

The regulations break down advertisements into 16 classes of which Class 2, 4 and 5 are relevant to this SPD.

### 1.3.3 Listed Building Consent.

A number of retail and commercial properties comprise listed buildings and in this instance the planning balance weighs more heavily in favour of the buildings design and the conservation of historic fabric.

A Listed Building Consent will be required for any proposed alterations to the shop front and/or signage and would be required in conjunction with a planning application and/or advertisement consent.

Further advice can be obtained from the Building Conservation officer (contact details at the end of this document) and English Heritage at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england/>



## 2.0 Legislation and planning policy framework

### 2.1 The development Plan

Walsall's Development Plan comprises the Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UPD) and the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS).

#### 2.1.1 Walsall Unitary Development Plan

The current Walsall UDP was formally adopted by Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council in March 2005, although a small number of policies have not been "saved" or have been replaced by policies in the BCCS.

Design policies are primarily set out in Chapter 3 (Environment and Amenity). Of particular relevance is Policy ENV 35 (Appearance of Commercial Buildings).

#### Policy ENV35

*'The design of frontages to shops and other commercial premises should be appropriate to their setting and sympathetic to the building on which they are situated. In considering proposals for shop fronts, shutters and grilles, canopies, blinds and signs, the Council will take the following factors into account:-*

- I. The architectural and historic merits of the building.*
- II. The character of the area in which they are located.*
- III. The prominence of the building.*
- IV. Whether the building is subject to surveillance by CCTV.*
- V. Any exceptional justification for the proposal.*
- VI. Any proposals and initiatives for the enhancement of the centre in which they are located.'*

For the sound implementation of this policy for shop fronts, it should be read in conjunction with Policy ENV32 (Design and Development Proposals). This policy notes that design standards are most significant within conservation areas and town, district or local centres.

#### Policy ENV32

- (a)  
Poorly designed development or proposals which fail to properly take account of the context or surroundings will not be permitted. This policy will be applied to all development but will be particularly significant in the following locations:-

- I. Within a Conservation Area.
- II. Within a Town, District or Local Centre.
- III. On a visually prominent site.
- IV. Within or adjacent to transport corridors, including canals, railways, motorways and major roads.
- V. Water frontages.
- VI. Areas with a special character arising from the homogeneity of existing development in the neighbourhood.
- VII. In the vicinity of a Listed Building, Building of Local Interest or Registered Parks and Gardens.
- VIII. Within or adjacent to Local Nature Reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, parks, cemeteries or public open spaces.
- IX. Within or adjacent to Green Belt, agricultural or open land.
- X. In an priority area for environmental improvement (Policy ENV9).

(b)

When assessing the quality of design of any development proposal the Council will use some or all of the following criteria:-

- I. The appearance of the proposed development.
- II. The height, proportion, scale, and mass of proposed buildings/structures.
- III. The materials proposed for buildings, external spaces and means of enclosure.
- IV. The integration and co-ordination of buildings and external space.
- V. Community safety and security.
- VI. The visual relationship of the proposed development with adjacent areas, the street and the character of the surrounding neighbourhood.
- VII. The effect on the local character of the area.
- VIII. The proposed vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns.
- IX. The integration of existing natural and built features of value.
- X. The maintenance requirements of the development.

As many retail areas are also with conservation areas or comprise listed buildings the following policies must also be addressed.

- **ENV27** (Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest);
- **ENV28** (The 'Local List' of Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest);
- **ENV29** (Conservation Areas).

### 2.1.2 The Black Country Core Strategy

The Core Strategy was adopted in February 2011. A key policy relevant to shop fronts is CSP4 (Place Making). The policy seeks proposals that make a positive contribution to place-making and environmental improvement, including in the following spatial terms:

- The design of spaces and buildings will be influenced by their context and seek to enhance the unique attributes the area offers in terms of its local character and heritage whilst responding to current day needs, changes in society and cultural diversity.
- The Black Country will be a safe and secure place through organising the urban environment in ways that encourage people to act in a civil and responsible manner. The pedestrian environment should be closely associated with active frontages at street level and an appropriate intensity of use in all areas at all times.

Policy ENV2 (Historic Character and Local Distinctiveness) makes reference to the need to analyse the characteristics of the areas of historic character that make the Black Country distinctive.

Policy ENV3 (Design Quality) seeks the delivery of distinct and successful place-making which will depend on understanding and

responding to the identity of each place with high quality design proposals.

“By Design” and Secured By Design principles are considered to play a key role in this design process for shop fronts.

### 2.1.3 Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plan

Significant tracks of the borough’s town and district centers are designated as Conservation Area and a number of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans are in place to analyse the existing character of these areas including their shop fronts. These documents are an important evidence base in the decision making and management process and offer detailed appraisal of shop fronts.

## 2.2 National Planning policy Framework

The UK government’s current agenda is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012).

Under the design section, paragraph 58 states that *‘planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments ... establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit’*. It goes on to state under paragraph 67 *‘Poorly placed advertisements can have a negative impact on the appearance of the built*

*and natural environment. Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Only those advertisements which will clearly have an appreciable impact on a building or on their surroundings should be subject to the local planning authority's detailed assessment. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts.'*

With regards to the heritage stance paragraph 126 states that '*Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment,29 including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats*'.

### **2.3 The Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**

Due to the role of conservation areas in the borough's town centres the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 must be considered.

Section 16 of the Act states the '*in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*'.

Section 66 of the Act meanwhile requires the decision maker to consider the impact of development which affects a listed buildings or their setting.

Section 72 of the Act requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. As shop fronts play such a key role in the character of an area, the Act carries weight in the decision making process.

### **2.4 Designing Walsall Supplementary Planning document**

The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was adopted February 2008 and was revised in July 2013.

Under the section concerned with buildings it states that the key issues include:

- *Use materials that are sympathetic to their context acknowledging the significant traditional pallet of materials within a locality*
- *Create built detail that relates to human scale and which provides visual interest to elevations*
- *Explore and demonstrate opportunities for incorporating public art within the overall design*
- *Select materials that are appropriate in terms of quality, robustness, maintenance and*



*ability to weather attractively  
in an urban environment*

The SPD aims to improve the character of town centres and ensure that new development embraces quality development that will constitute regeneration.



### 3.0 Shop front design issues and considerations

#### 3.1 Historic evolution: Types, eras and styles of buildings

Retail development, in a form that we recognise today, that being a unit with a shop front, shop window and entrance, became popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The earliest type of retail premises in Walsall date to a period before architectural design was prevalent. Little of this period, known as the Vernacular period, survived the industrial period and the redevelopment plans of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and as such these have been lost to us.

There are only a few shops that predate the mid part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but there is far greater array of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial units.

##### 3.1.1 Georgian (18<sup>th</sup> century – 1830's)

Vernacular buildings were replaced by Georgian buildings by the 1780's. Georgian architecture introduces order and proportion into the design of buildings. Constraint and simplicity are key components of this era and shop fronts were designed to reflect the broader control of the architectural elements of the wider façade.

Georgian shop fronts are typically

constructed from timber with smaller panes of glass, to mirror those in the sash windows (although these may have been subsequently replaced with larger panes).

Whilst there was variation in styles in Georgian architecture and shop fronts, in Walsall these largely follow simple classical lines, often employing the Tuscan or Doric Order as a framework.

Paint finishes did vary, but black and white (to harmonise with other joinery on the façade) was most common.

Generally the profile of the shop front was square and projected little from the elevation, keeping a generally flat appearance, with the exception of bow or bay windows.

Shop fronts are often elements within the elevation, with brickwork surrounding them and sometimes with separate entrances. Larger premises are known to comprise ironwork that allows for a greater span to be opened up.



### 3.1.2 Victorian (1830's – 1901)

It was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that shopping became the leisure pursuit of the expanding and ever affluent middle classes and shop fronts responded to attract custom. With the passing of the Georgian era, buildings increased in scale, mass and decoration and the shop fronts became a major feature.

Buildings became larger and shops, therefore, become wider and deeper. Engineering allowed the upper floor brickwork to be carried on internal iron piers, with no need for external support. As such, decorative pilasters were added only to provide a composition that visually transferred masonry to the ground.

Victorian buildings started to introduced greater architectural creativity. Key to 19<sup>th</sup> century architecture was the liberation of a predominant style. Shop fronts gave the greatest opportunity to explore this, with the use of gothic, Italianate, Moorish and all of the classical orders, sometimes fused together to great effect. The creativity in architectural language was commonplace and to accommodate this shop fronts often became elevated and often deeper.

The profile of the shop front was exaggerated with corbels, finials and other decoration. Pilasters increased in depth and modelling was heightened to emphasise decoration.

Whilst wood remained the most

common material to construct shop fronts in, other materials were heavily employed including metals, stone and ceramics. Few building retain this rich mix of finishes, but these would have included, brass, copper, iron, polished granite, sandstone, brick, tiles, terracotta and faience.

Expansive glazing opened up shop fronts with large plate glass display windows held in place by slender fluted mullions with transoms windows above. The transom windows often were formed from smaller panes of glazing which might have incorporated leaded or stained glass.

It is not uncommon for early Georgian shops to have been given a Victorian shop front later on ; however, it is important to recognise that the architecture of the age will have informed the type of shop front used.





### 3.1.3 *Edwardian & early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1901–1920)*

Following the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century architecture took two different paths and similarly retail design in shop fronts followed suit.

The first approach reacted to industrialisation and returned to the architecture of the past; a stark contrast to the Victorians heavy application of decoration. This movement was under an umbrella of earlier English influences and flourished in the neo-vernacular style, the Arts & Crafts school and Queen Anne Revival.

Shop fronts responded by stripping back detailing and employing robust and simple components. Some references to the classical proportions of earlier composition was retained, but often through a cruder and naive application.

Counter to this modern approach was the entrenched tradition of heavily decorated classicism, largely in the form of Edwardian Baroque.

This last flourish of heady design became evermore gaudy, colourful and heavy. To support the expanding mass of decoration structural elements often became larger and large geometric shapes became incorporated.

Greater use of terracotta and faience became popular in conjunction with heavily moulded joinery of architectural proportions.

Panels of stylised vegetation, swags, garlands, carotids, cherubs, cartouches, plaques, roundels and trophies became festooned across elevations to champion this golden age of Edwardian living.

Cut, frosted and stained glass, enamel and stone was still used, however in a more mass produced, industrial and commercial style, in much the same way the primary building materials were produced and assembled. This was the age of the gin palaces, early movie houses and theatre going and this flamboyant taste for excess and pleasure was played out on shop fronts.



### 3.1.4 Art deco and inter-war (1920 – 1945)

After the First World War architecture retained two very different approaches.

The Arts & Crafts movement evolved into the modern suburban style of “Metroland” in retail flourished in local shopping parades. These employed the use of planted timbers, herringbone brickwork and rustic vernacular in “Tudorbethan” designs that comprised simple timber shop fronts under jettisoned bressumers.

At the opposite end of the spectrum was a radical modernist approach that took the shape of Art Deco, in response to the jazz age.

Deco did not dismiss the past wholeheartedly, using traditional setting out of shop fronts, pilasters, transom lights and door recesses, but applied the new artistic language of the day.

Simple abstract forms and shapes were delivered using a controlled palette of materials and colour. Timber was commonly used in conjunction with ceramic products such as tiles, brick and faience, but also render.

Architectural elements of shop fronts were exaggerated to express this concept of engineered movement and speed that all forms adopted. Pilasters emphasised vertical proportions and transom bars sliced through other components to give the elevation a chic aesthetic.

Nowhere more was this seen than in transom lights themselves. Glazing was the tool of deco architecture that allowed the art to be expressed most freely in architecture. Sunburst and other abstractions of explosive cubist form were transferred into leaded lights.

Creams, white and black were the preferred colours of the age and allowed strong contrasts that emphasised the acute forms of the shop fronts.



### 3.1.5 Post war to date (1945 – to date)

Following the Second World War the entire concept of shopping shifted to the flexible modern model of retail. Standardisation was introduced through shopping malls and this fed its way down through to the high street.

The 1950's saw the use of the 'International style' which was adopted principally through the 'Festival of Britain'. Fenestration was emphasised through deep framing and stall risers were cut away to create large open continuous display windows. Decoration was stripped away, other than for strategically placed logos or crests.

During the affluence of post war Britain, natural materials, particularly Portland stone were favoured in conjunction with brick to emphasise architectural elements.

By the 1960's the revolution in deconstructionist architecture and the advent of new building materials transformed the high street. Curtain wall glazing predominated in conjunction with spandrel panels of ply and ceramics which were introduced to make shop front more abstract and asymmetrical. When applied as a parade of shops this could result in seamless glazing across the entire ground floor, with only columns (known as piloti) to support the upper floors.

The shop entrance recess remained

popular, but in conjunction with the wider window, which were often splayed at an angle and overhanging the stall riser that was reduced to a plinth.

Canopies were often introduced as part of the structural frame and this helped regulate the signage areas and overall arrangement of shop fronts, but segregated the commercial aspect of the building from upper zones that functioned independently.

Brutalism made an introduction by the 1970's and allowed for even more abstract and unconventional forms to be created in often highly modelled elevations that stepped out and employed buttressing and fins in brick and shuttered, slab and reinforced concrete.

There was a return to a pseudo Victorian style in a reaction to Brutalism in the 1980's in the form of post modernism with more clearly ordered shop fronts using scaled up elements of 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts.





### **Policy SF1: Historic shop fronts**

Where an original (or part of) pre-1939 shop front has survived, this should be retained as part of any reuse or adaption so as to conserve the original character of the building and surrounding area.

Development proposals for new shop fronts should take into consideration the design and appearance of the original historic (pre-1939) shop front to inform its design.

For all applications concerning listed buildings, locally listed buildings or buildings within conservation areas, the Historic Environment Register (HER) shall be consulted and any evidence of the original design and appearance of the shop front shall be submitted as part of the application.

### **Justification:**

UDP Policy ENV35 makes a clear reference to shop front design being sympathetic to the building and within the criteria places the architectural and historic merit of the building as being a factor that must be taken into account. Moreover, the NPPF (Paragraph 128) requires planning applications concerning heritage assets to be evidenced by the HER.



### 3.2 Uses

As set out in Section 1.2 (above) this document is concerned with a wide variety of uses under the retail use classes (A1-5). The form of a retail premises vary greatly in relation to use. Whilst conventional shops comprise the greater majority of retail premises in town centres and can broadly be described as set out under Section 3.1, there are a host of other building types that cannot be described in this way and have developed into different forms in order to carry out their function.

Banks and post offices are a common use within town centres and

have a particular format. As safe houses for the deposit of money, the early banks typically developed an architecture designed to appear secure, often employing high window cills and substantial masonry. As the commercial presence of the bank grew on the high street through the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the banking hall became a public trading space and grew in scale and elevated design. Banks are now often the grandest building in the high street. Whilst these buildings often have large single internal spaces, their fortress-like façade often comprises a series of strong architectural bays.



Public houses are also common in our high streets and like banks are a business model that have had to

adapt significantly over the years.

Unlike banks, however, public houses take on many guises. From

the early model of the inns and taverns to that of the gin palace.

Whilst it is not possible in this supplementary document to describe comprehensively all types of retail premises, it is important to acknowledge the original design of a buildings shop front and retain the character of this during any adoptions or change of use.

Other uses have had to absorb into

the design of their frontage specific function, such as cash points, letter boxes and notice boards and this has altered the architecture.

Many professional offices such as accountants and legal firms work out of properties that were built as housing and therefore their presence in the street is more subtle than conventional retail, and this needs to be retained.

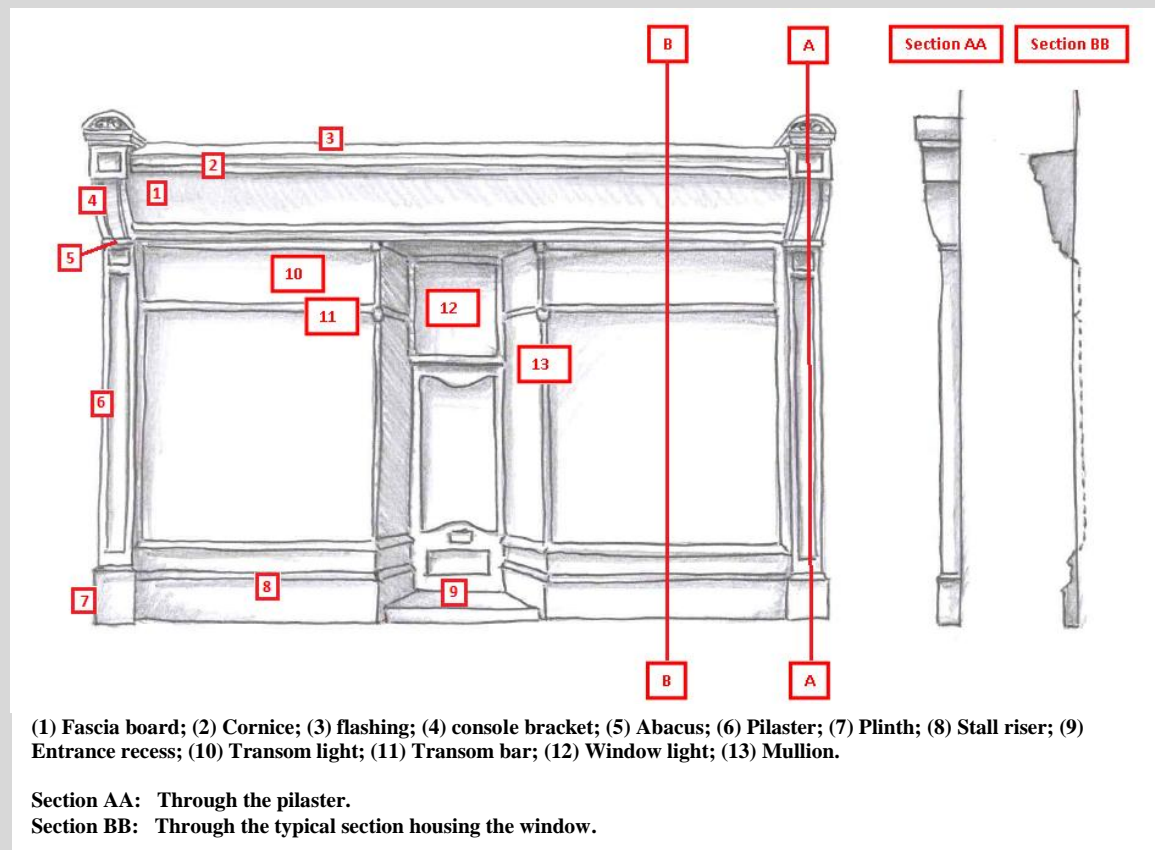


Figure 1: The components of a shop front.

### 3.3 Components of shop fronts

Whilst Section 3.1.1 has illustrated the great variation in shop front architecture over the past 200 years, there has always remained a

standard format to how a shop front is laid out. Whilst it may not always comprise all of these architectural components, a shop front will largely be formed of the following.

### 3.3.1 Proportions

As with all aspects of architecture and design, the proportions of shop fronts are critical if they are to appear in scale with the wider building and the street scene.

Key aspects to consider are the entrance, the pilasters, the fascia board, the window and the stall riser.

The entrance to shop fronts typically comprises a doorway either flush with the wider shop front or recessed and this matter is explored further in Section 3.3. Entrances are normally lower than the full height of the unit, but traditionally were designed to relate up through the shop front layout. A fan light or door light would typically sit above the door and relate to the transom light over the main window, giving the door prominence in the arrangement.

It has been common to replace taller older doors with shorter modern doors and utilise the window light over the door as a place for signage. This compromises the prominence of the entrance point to the unit and gives the entrance a squat appearance.

The pilasters effectively frame the shop front and provide an anchor, grounding the upper floors. Pilasters should comprise an appropriate width and depth that carries the pilaster and masonry. Where shop fronts extend beyond one traditional unit/plot pilasters should be used to translate that plot formation. In modern buildings with plate glass

frontages, pillars or piloti can be used to the same effect.

Fascia signs are addressed in greater detail under Section 3.4; however the board plays a significant role in the overall proportion of the shop front. Shops originally had fascia boards that sit within an allocated band of masonry or timber that often took the form of the frieze on an entablature. This ensured the signage sat within the wider proportions of the building. Modern signage has become much larger and dominant on the shop front and compromises the proportions of the window and often cuts through pilasters and across door lights giving them a squat appearance.

The window is the key aspect of the shop front and typically allows for a window display. Plate glass was introduced during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and facilitated wide shop fronts. Where more than one pane was being installed, slender fluted mullions were often used to link windows together and these normally carried through the transoms light above.

The stall riser is typically a short section of walling under the window to separate it from the ground. Since the 1950's the use of the stall riser has diminished and the proportion of the window has increased.

A traditional shop front will balance these elements in order to achieve a well composed façades that also relates to the wider elevation. The proportions will need to respond to the age and style of architecture.

**Policy SF2: Shop front proportions**

Poorly designed shop fronts that fail to relate to the context of the wider building and lack sound proportions as illustrated in figure 1.1 will not be permitted. When assessing the quality of the design of any shop front proposal the Council will use some or all of the following criteria:

- I. Where a stall riser is proposed it comprises a plinth and will not exceed 500mm in height;
- II. Pilasters should extend the full height of the window and should comprise a width of no greater than 1/8 of the height. Pilasters should project no more than 150mm from the wall and comprise a plinth that aligns with that on any stall riser. Pilasters will terminate with an abacus possibly over a capital or console at or under the lower edge of the fascia board or entablature. A pilaster may continue through the fascia board in the form of a pilaster head and may extend beyond the upper line of the fascia board with a finial, pediment or ball;

**III. Fascia**

boards/entablatures will be positioned directly under the supporting structure to the masonry wall and shall cover an area no greater than a fifth of the area of the shop front. The fascia board/entablature may be forward set on a mount (possibly with a forward downward angle of no greater than 20 degrees) but shall sit behind the abacus of the pilaster, capital or console. The fascia board shall not extend over/above the first floor window cills;

- IV. The window shall extend up to the underside of the fascia and may include a transom light level with or above the head of the doorway. Any space between the top of the door and the underside of the fascia board/entablature shall be glazed.

- V. Mullions, piers and transom bars shall be kept to a minimum width/thickness and shall not exceed the structural requirements necessary to provide adequate strength in the shop front.



These proportions will not relate to non-conventional retail buildings such as banks and public houses or post war properties of a modern design and will need to be adapted where the buildings physical constraints will require them to be relaxed.

**Justification:**

Policy ENV35 of the UDP requires the design of frontages to shop fronts to be appropriate to their setting and sympathetic to the building.

Shop fronts that have poor proportions that appear top heavy, clumsy or squat detract from the overall appearance of the building and damage the wider character of the townscape. Joinery in traditional shop fronts is typically slender and finer. Proposals that utilise heavy elements with crude junctions will have a significantly harmful impact on the relationship between the building and the shop front.

### 3.3.2 Materials

As noted in Section 3.1.1 (above) it was during the Victorian age that the most diverse range of materials were used in shop fronts. Materials must be durable, coordinated and relate to the style of building.

Timber is the most versatile building material, not only is it strong and durable, its grain allows it to work well under compression and tension; it has properties that allow it to be malleable and is an excellent material to carve.

Timber was therefore the preferred medium of choice when constructing shop fronts as it could be both structural, delicate and decorative.

Historic timber however has very different properties to modern timbers, with soft woods carrying the properties of modern hard woods. It is therefore important to consider carefully the form and position of timber in a shop front. Where pilasters meet the ground they are vulnerable to decay from street splash back and surfaces that can act as ledges will rot from pooling water.

The traditional capping to a timber shop front is lead flashing which is fed back into the coursing of the masonry above. Due to theft of valuable metals, where flashing is vulnerable it may be possible to use an alternative look-a-like material.

Stall risers and sometimes pilasters are constructed in masonry. In Walsall this will largely be brick, with only a few high order properties being constructed in stone.

Ceramic materials are also used in many 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century shop fronts, such as glazed tiles, terracotta or faience. With the latter this sometimes comprises the entablature and finials of the signage fascia (when used in conjunction with an iron frame).

Render is less common, but is found in the form of some 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco and Roman cement. Typically this would allow moulding such as rustication or banding to be applied. Paint finishes are addressed in Section 3.1.5 and for render this would normally be white, cream or magnolia with a black plinth to mask street splash back.

Iron, copper, lead and brass were typically reserved for window decoration, glazing and cill coverings but are rare survivals and should be retained where possible.

Glazing is naturally a significant material in a shop front, but the type of glazing can have a significant impact.

Floated and plate glass remain the most common historic glass, but where leaded, stained or frosted glass survives, this should be retained and reinforced with plate glass behind if it is vulnerable to damage.

Modern materials include aluminium (powder coated), Perspex and UPVC plastic. Whilst some of these are unavoidable in modern circumstances, the layout, proportions and colours finishes of the shop front become more important. In conservation areas and on listed buildings, these materials will not be appropriate.

### Policy SF3: Materials in shop fronts

The Council will require all new shop fronts to Listed Building, Locally listed buildings and those within conservation areas to be constructed from traditional materials including timber and ceramics dressed in lead in conjunction with other materials that relate to the original shop front or the wider façade. Such materials may include stone, brick, terracotta, faience, tiles or a variety of metals.

Shop fronts in other areas may be constructed using other materials, but this depends on the dimensions of the individual components, their fixing, surface finish and colour.

#### Justification:

Materials have different properties and traditionally these qualities reflected their application within buildings. Timber performs well under compression and tension

and can produce slender profiles, whilst masonry is more durable to damp and tiles resist staining and splash back.

The use of modern materials can impact significantly on the wider design of the building. UPVC plastic lacks strength and requires wider profiles to carry structural components and aluminium often holds colours poorly.

### 3.3.3 Colour finishes

One of the most significant impacts of a shop front can be its colour finish. As with signage (section 3.4) the colour of shop fronts is used to attract custom. Whilst bright colours may be more noticeable, they often give a gaudy appearance and generally reflect badly on the quality of the service or product. Confident use of bold colours can work if applied well.



In conservation areas and on listed building controlling the use of colour is even more important as some colours will distract from the wider architecture and townscape of the area.

#### Policy SF4: Colour finishes

The Council will require all new shop fronts to Listed Building, Locally listed buildings and those within Conservation Areas to be given a paint finish that is not a synthetic colour.

Shop fronts in other areas will also be required to have the colour finish approved during the planning process and these too should not use bright colours.

Strong and confident use of colour will be supported, that will not juxtapose poorly with the principal materials used in the rest of the building, including the joinery to windows and the base colour of the masonry/render.

Where joinery extends close to the ground, black or other similarly dark colour should be used across the plinth to absorb the visual impact of dirt from splash back. Similarly any render or tiles on stall risers should be kept dark to reduce the impact

#### Justification:

The colour finish of a material has just as significant impact on the character of a building and wider areas as the quality of the material itself.

light colours detract from architecture of the wider building and give the shop front greater prominence.

Colour can be reserved to pick out architectural decoration and often a tonal colour or gold is used to pick out stylised decoration or motifs. Allegorical figures can either be white, painted to match the wider shop front or painted realistically.

### 3.4 Access

Entrances into shops is a critical part of the design. Georgian shop fronts typically had steps to elevate the entrance above the street, but with improvements in street paving during the 19<sup>th</sup> century entrances were lowered to street level. Recesses became fashionable with an area of decorative tile work on a raked bed of limecrete. This arrangement survived through to the 1930's.

Today doors are a standard size and where such doors have been retrofitted into historic shop units with elevated ceilings this has damaged the overall proportions of the unit. The use of taller doors should be retained so as to accord with Policy SF2 along with the original layout of entrances

Today retail premises are governed by the Equality Act 2010. Whilst this legislation addresses all forms of disabilities, level access from the street is critical for the elderly, infirm, pram users and wheel chair users.

#### Policy SF5: Access to shops

Where original (pre-1930) accesses to shops survive, including recesses, these shall be retained and where they have been lost, their original design should be incorporated into the new design.

Proposals for both adaption and new shop fronts shall consider the following criteria for entrances:

- Level access, including use of internal ramping and lifts (unless there is scope for an external ramp or lift in the landscaping);
- Appropriate floor covering to recesses entrances;
- Doorbells to request assistance when obstacles such as steps cannot be removed; and
- Retention of door widths and heights that are original to the style of the building, but meeting minimum disability width when necessary.

#### Justification:

Entrances to buildings are important as they are often the architectural focus of

a shop front, but also aid the function of a retail premises. UDP policy GP5 (Equal Opportunities) and GP6 (Disabled People) support the ease of movement for all people in our community, but should be well designed. Policy GP6 states that *'Measures to improve accessibility should be of a high standard of design to protect the visual appearance of buildings and the townscape'*.



Modern entrances in shop fronts often lack the sense of arrival and are often integrated into the wider glazing, this can be dangerous and may require marking or etching on the glass to signalise their presence when doors are closed.

The effective use of entrances can help create a rhythm in the street scene and provide individuality and independence from neighbouring premises, particularly in a terrace or parade.

Entrances link internal sales space to passing trade and if not invested in well, can discourage trade. Entrances should not be littered with clutter and the use of recessed entrances with tiled flooring aid the link between these two environments.

### 3.5 Advertisement

Signage is addressed briefly in relation to the wider proportions of shop fronts under Section 3.1.3 (above) however is a complex issue in its own right and required separate consent (see section 1.3.2).

Poor quality, excessive and multiple signage is ineffective, it causes visual clutter and serves to make the adverts themselves ineffective. Rather than being hard hitting (as intended) multiple signs become a distraction to the core business purpose of the premises. Moreover, poor signage can reflect poorly on the quality of the service or product.

Simple signage that provides only the very basic information and is conceived as part of the composition of the shop front, with matching or complimentary colours improves the perception of a commercial operation.

Illumination has become more



popular in all types of signage and now includes internally illuminated Perspex signage. Whilst there was historically an illuminated perspective to signage, this new wave of illuminated signage lacks quality and gives commercial areas a poor quality appearance during the day and night, based on the poor quality of Perspex as a material in the built environment. Illumination is addressed specifically in Section 3.5.

Taste has evolved significantly over recent years and the public are now acutely aware of controlled modern design and chic branding. This approach in signage can achieve elevated commercial presence in the high street.

### *3.5.1 Fascia signs*

A fascia sits across the top of the shop front and is integral to the entablature (see figure 1 and section 3.3.1). Fascias are the most common form of signage and are found on most retail premises.

The pressure to compete on the high street has resulted in fascia signs becoming deeper, wider and forward set. This has often resulted in the fascia extending down over the transom light, over the door recess, upwards towards first floor windows and over roller shutters.

Policy FS2(III) sets out the general proportions of a fascia board. Any signage that is mounted onto the fascia board should be shallow in depth and should not extend over the face of the board itself.

### *3.5.2 Projecting signs*

The use of projecting signs is well established but the rational over their position and size has been lost over the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Signs should not project excessively forwards of the building so as to compete with similar signs on other commercial buildings. Projecting signs must be clear of pedestrian and vehicular movement, but not be fixed above the shop front to the wall, but should be fixed either to the fascia board or more appropriately the pilaster.

Projecting signs can either be fixed directly into the shop front or can be hung from a cantilever or bracket. Projecting signs also offer opportunities for more innovative signage in the form of sculptural objects, free-formed logos or art.

### *3.5.3 Other signage*

There are few occasions where other signage on the elevation would be appropriate. In the past first floor masonry was sometimes used to display additional or alternative signage. This would only be encouraged where there is an historic precedent or it is of exceptional design quality and is located in a position that relates well to the proportions of the wider building.

Individually cut out letters and logos can, when of a quality material, be pinned proud of the elevation to

introduce signage to masonry where no traditional shop front exists.

Signage can bridge the gap with art when applied directly to buildings and the opportunity for controlled applied art work can benefit the character of an area. It is important to ensure that murals and graffiti art are undertaken by competent artists and use strong form, colours and composition.



Etching to glass and application of vinyl can add further ways of promoting products and brands. Such signage should, however, be applied cautiously as these can generate clutter and detract from the core commercial activity of the premises.

#### **Policy SF6: Advertisements**

The Council will require all proposals for new signage to respond to the proportions of the shop front to which it will be affixed. When assessing the quality of signage proposal the Council will

consider the following criteria:

- I. Fascia signs shall not project more than 100mm from the fascia board and shall not extend beyond the area of the fascia board.
- II. Projecting and hanging signs should not exceed 900mm, should be no lower than 2m from the highway and not fixed above the shop front.
- III. Signage to Listed Building, Locally listed buildings and those within Conservation Areas must be formed from traditional materials such as timber and not Perspex or other types of plastic. Corporate colours may be accepted but should be altered if they are very bright, in accordance with Policy SF4.
- IV. Lettering and logos should be kept to a minimum and should leave a boarder around the sign itself.

Shop fronts in all areas will be required to have the colour finish approved during the planning process and these will generally not support the use of bright colours.

**Justification:**

Signage and associated advertisements are the most significant distraction from good quality design within commercial areas and when excessively large, brightly coloured and of poor quality can have a very harmful impact on the quality of the surrounding built environment.

It is important to note that advertisements, when done well, can introduce interest and diversity to a street. Innovative design and the use of quality materials allows for advertisements to give premises the individuality and marketing prominence that they strive for in the market place.

**3.6 Illumination**

Commercial premises use a variety of types of illumination to different effect, these include illumination to signage, to the façade and internally lighting of units.

**3.6.1 Illuminated signage**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the advent of gas lighting, proprietors of commercial premises have explored ways of illuminating their signage. Generally this was limited to the most exclusive retail premises, becoming more common with the advent of electricity. Traditionally illumination was external and washed across the face of signage, but with the use of Perspex and other translucent materials internal lighting within the sign has become



common. Internal lighting allows for the entire signage box to be illuminated, projecting the base colour of the signage material. The scope for use of internal illumination has resulted in the impact of modern signage being far greater. Moreover, internal illumination has escalated the use of poor quality materials such as Perspex across the borough.

External lighting to signage can still be of poor quality and swan neck lighting, neon strip lighting and spot lighting should be avoided, with swan neck lighting only being used on public houses.

### 3.6.2 *Illuminated façades*

In some circumstances buildings are illuminated in order to give them great presence or highlight architectural details. Whilst this can comprise lighting that washes over the entire façade, this can also be applied over a shop front.

The use of harsh lighting over a shop front is not encouraged, neither is the use of neon lighting. Some lighting is considered acceptable subject to the lighting being integrated well into the wider design of the shop front and have a controlled use of colour and brightness.

### 3.6.3 *Internal illumination*

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became common to retain a degree of illumination in shop windows in order

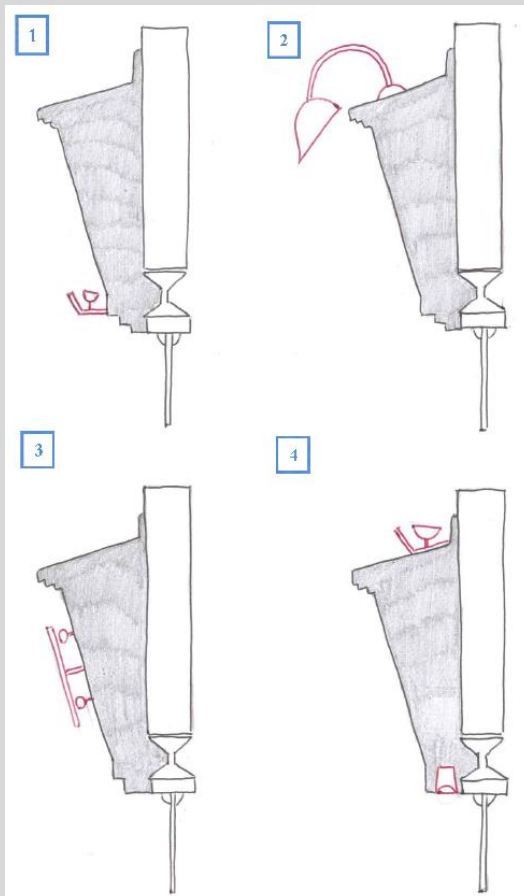
to display wares. The use of excessive security over windows in the form of solid roller shutters has removed this night time animation which in itself offered a degree of security.

It is recommended that any lighting strategy for retail premises includes internal illumination of the premises itself and that this should work in conjunction with any security measures.



Lighting allows for different activity to take place throughout the day. It is particularly important to leisure based retail, evening events and food and drink establishments.

Good lighting can create an ambience that encourages growth in the evening economy and can enhance the interplay of different businesses outside the core daytime trading hours.



- (1) Trough lighting: Strip lighting placed in a trough along the bottom or top of a fascia board. This allows for the light to wash over the principal face without any glare into the street.
- (2) Swan-neck lighting: A shaded light on a curved stalk that hung over the fascia from above. This provides spots of lighting rather than a continuous band and was rarely used on shops, but more so for public houses and restaurants.
- (3) Halo lighting: Strip lighting placed behind either a signage board or individually cut out letters (see Section 3.4) and allows a glow to form around the signage.
- (4) Architectural lighting: Either spot lighting sat in a trough or brackets on the wall above the shop front or spot lighting set into the soffit under the fascia to light up the window display.

Figure 2: Lighting strategies on shop front fascias

Imaginative and sensitive lighting can also display our town centres in contrasting ways and can allow building often unnoticed in busy retail areas during the day to be brought to life in the evening.

### Policy SF7: Illumination

The Council will require all proposals for new shop fronts and signage to control the use of all illumination.

- I. When assessing illumination in planning applications and advertisement consents lighting solutions will be considered in the following sequentially preferable order:
  - i) Trough lighting;
  - ii) Halo lighting;
  - iii) Architectural spot lighting;
  - iv) Swan-neck lighting;
  - v) Solid panel with internally illuminated lettering/logos; and
  - vi) Completely illuminated panel.
- II. Illuminated signage to Listed Building, Locally listed buildings and within Conservation Areas must be of an external design only.
- III. Internally illuminated signage may be permitted in other locations but shall accord with the fascia

dimensions set out in policy SF2(III).

IV. All illumination shall not exceed the Institution of Lighting Engineers, Technical Report Number 5: *Brightness of Illuminated Advertisements*.

- E2 – Low district brightness areas (eg rural or small village locations)
- E3 - Medium district brightness areas (eg small town centres, urban locations)
- E4- high district brightness areas (eg city and town centres with high levels of night time activity)

Recommendations for Maximum Luminance (cd/m<sup>2</sup>)

Illuminated Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Zone E1	Zone E2	Zone E3	Zone E4
Up to 10.00	100	600	800	1000
Over 10.00	n/a	300	600	600

**Justification:**

In order to preserve the character of the area and ensure adequate highway safety is maintained.



### 3.7 Security

Security has always been a serious consideration in retail due to the risk associated with commercial goods. The fear of crime in conjunction with a rise in antisocial behavior in modern society has resulted in a drive towards the use of aggressive security and surveillance measures.

The use of roller shutters, grills, CCTV cameras and bollards are all being used to install security at retail premises. Excessive security does, however, encourage crime itself as it suggests that valuable goods are present and in the case of solid shutters provides screening to any criminal activity within the premises should the security be breached. Of greatest concern is the dead frontage and hostile environment that excessive security (principally shutters) gives after business hours.

### 3.7.1 Shutters

The need for shutters and approach taken when proposing to install a roller shutter requires careful consideration and justification as it can entirely alter the proportions of the shop front causing significant harm. There is a general preemption against shutters.

There are a number of different types of shutters which allow varying degrees of visibility into the unit.

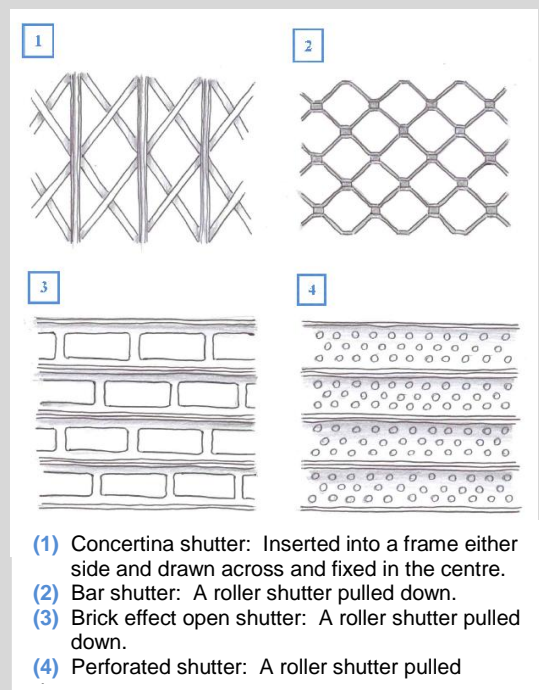


Figure 3: Types of shutters

The more solid a shutter is the more hostile the environment will appear outside of working hours and the less likely it will secure planning permission.

The different types of shutters all have housing and runner guide rails that must be accommodated within the shop front. The concertina

shutters are the easiest to install as they fold back laterally into a flat housing unit. The other types all constitute roller shutters, whereby the shutter is coiled back round an axle within a square housing box.

Due to the housing unit, roller shutters generate the greatest harm to shop fronts, particularly when retrofitting them to an existing historic shop front as the existing layout presents a constraint.

The setting of a roller shutter into a new shop front is easier as it can be factored into the overall setting out of the structure, allowing the housing to be lost within the building or the shop front itself, otherwise it can result in it being fixed forwards of historic detailing.



The insensitive positioning of roller shutter housing can damage the appearance of important architectural details and realign other elements of the shop front such as signage (section 3.4), illumination (section 3.5) and canopies (3.7).



There are a number of options with regard to the fixing of shutters into a shop front and these are set out in figure 3.

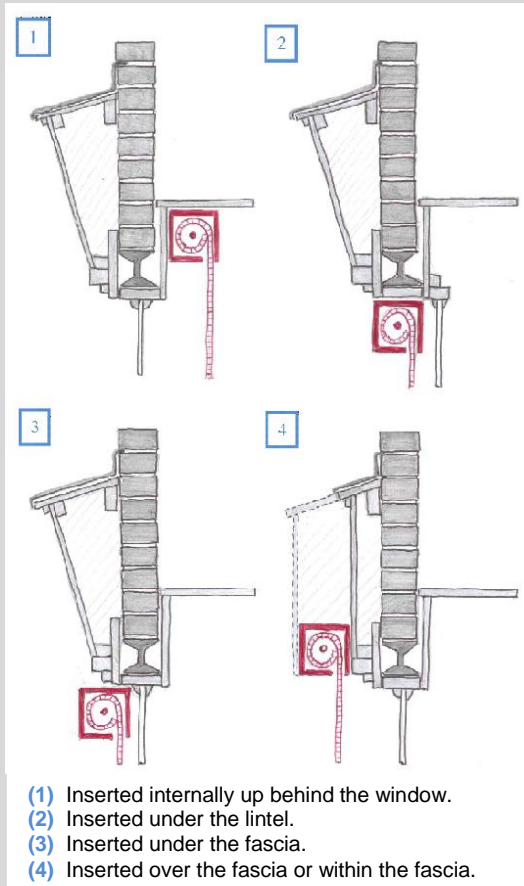


Figure 4: The positions of shutters

The preferable position in which to fix the shutter housing is internally, and this is necessary when dealing with a listed building or when an original and complete shop front that pre-dates 1939 is in place (subject to there being no fine internal plasterwork or timber that would be damaged or altered).

When new shop fronts are being installed, planning the position of any shutter should be considered as part of the setting out. Shutters should never be simply fitted on at the end

of the design process. In conservation areas, a roller shutter will only be permitted if one has been granted previously.

If a shutter is required, new shop front must look to install a roller shutter under the lintel of the shop front in the first instance or under the fascia if this is not possible. Only on very exception circumstances shall a roller shutter be fixed within or over a fascia. In this event, the premises would not be in a prominent location or within a principal shopping frontage.

Other types of retail premises such as banks, public houses and leisure uses should always use internal security rather than external shutters as the shop fronts are normally unconventional and do not allow for the shutter housing to be absorbed into the architecture.

### 3.7.2 Grills

Grills are preferable to roller shutters as they are less obtrusive, can be fit within the window reveal and can be removed entirely during business hours.

Planning permission will look favorably on grills over roller shutters as when painted a dark colour they are difficult to detect against the character of the wider building.

Grills should use frames that align with the mullions and transoms of the window behind and should be fixed sensitively into the masonry joints so as not to irreversibly

damage the building.

Grills have proved to be more efficient than roller shutters which can be breached. Moreover, they allow internal lighting of the shop unit to be used during the evening to discourage antisocial behavior.

Grills should always sit within the window reveal and not be proud of the elevation or extend further down than the window cill.

### 3.7.3 Surveillance

Digital surveillance of the public realm immediately outside of a unit rarely acts as a deterrent, but when justified CCTV cameras should be used sensitively and sensibly.

Cameras should not be applied excessively, but to cover areas most prone to antisocial behavior. A license may be required and it is therefore necessary to contact the licensing authority to establish the requirement.

Cameras, like all technology, should be seen as a temporary measure as equipment dates and solution change. Therefore all fixing of cameras should be entirely reversible and not involve the fixing of equipment into the centre of masonry blocks and certainly not result in the removal of architectural details to facilitate its fixing.

### 3.7.4 Other security measures

Greater security can be installed into shop fronts which have no really

visual impact, including toughened glazing and strengthening stall risers.



#### Policy SF8: Shop front security

There is a general presumption against excessive security measures. Any proposals will need clear and sound justification.

The Council will require all proposals for new security solutions including, but not exclusively shutters, grills and surveillance systems to minimise the impact on the appearance of the shop front.

When assessing security measures in planning applications and listed building consents the following criteria will be used:

- I Shutters types will be considered in the following sequentially preferable order:

- i) Concertina shutters;
- ii) Bar shutters;
- iii) Brick effect open shutters;
- iv) Perforated shutters;
- v) Solid shutters.

Only (i) and (ii) will be considered acceptable on listed buildings, and (i), (ii) and (iii) in conservation areas.

- II Shutter positions will be considered in the following sequentially preferable order:

- i) Internal;
- ii) Under the window lintel;
- iii) Under the Fascia;
- and
- iv) Over the fascia.

Only (i) will be considered acceptable on listed buildings, and (i), (ii) or (iii) in conservation areas.

- III Grills will normally be considered favourable on most building types and in most areas if they are set within the window reveal, are no larger than the window itself, use frames that sit within the mullion and transom lines, are easily demountable and are painted a dark colour finish.

IV Digital surveillance may be used where it comprises no more than two cameras on a frontage, are of a dark colour and fixed between masonry blocks without visually disrupting or removing architectural detailing.

All security should be mindful of '*Secured By Design*', but apply it in accordance with sections I – IV.

#### **Justification:**

The use of security and surveillance can have significantly harmful impacts on the character of a shop front. Security measures that are not reversible or fail to integrate well with the profile or design of a shop front are not considered to be sound regeneration initiatives, but rather more fuelling the fear of crime and crime itself.



Guidance on 'Secured By Design' can be found at:

[http://www.securedbydesign.com/companies/companies.aspx?category=5&standard\\_3=yes&standard\\_4=yes&standard\\_15=yes&Search.x=73&Search.y=11](http://www.securedbydesign.com/companies/companies.aspx?category=5&standard_3=yes&standard_4=yes&standard_15=yes&Search.x=73&Search.y=11)

### 3.8 Canopies

Historically most retail premises had canopies or blinds that pulled out from the shop front in order to shelter produce placed on the pavement and trading from sun and inclement weather.

Often colours were associated with different trades, such as red and white for butchers and blue and white for fishmongers. This added a further layer of vibrancy to town centres, particularly during the summer.

Few canopies have survived the 20<sup>th</sup> century and those that do often have not been used for a long period of time and will need repair. The reintroduction of canopies will be supported in principle in association with food and drink related uses (Section 3.8) where pavement cafés are proposed.

It is necessary to gain the support from the local highways authority and licensing authority who govern the instillation of structures that project out into the street and may be a hazard to road users and pedestrians.

Traditionally canopy blinds would have been housed in the top or lower section of the fascia board and would have been wound out during the day with an opening pole. Canopies were typically very deep and low hung and would have extended the full width of the pavement and in some cases would have incorporated a side panel to deflect wind.

Modern canopies are typically flatter, shorter and higher so as not to disrupt passing traffic, yet still offering some degree of shade and character.

Canopy blinds are housed in boxes not dissimilar to roller shutters, albeit much narrower and with a fascia board, so that they can be integrated into the surface of a fascia panel.

Traditional canvas has now been substituted for a more durable material that needs less drying time should it become wet. New material and dyes also allows for a more vibrant application of colour and this should be controlled in line with guidance set out in Section 3.3.3. Either solid colour or stripes that coordinate with the main shop front colour should be used. The colour finish of the fascia panel of the blind boxing should also match that of the fascia board and surrounding shop front.

The use of canopies will have to be considered in conjunction with signage of both the host premises and in consultation with neighbouring businesses that may be affected by the instillation and use of a canopy.





### Policy SF9: Canopies

The Council will require all proposals for new canopies to relate to the design of the shop front.

Dutch and plastic type canopies will not be granted permission.

Traditional canvas style awning blinds will be supported where it is demonstrated that they can be integrated with the shop front and are of a colour and design that harmonises with the wider shop front.

### Justification:

Canopies can add vibrancy to retail development, but can only be seen to secure benefits when of a well designed nature that will weather well and be in harmony with the wider retail character of the building.

### 3.9 Pavement cafés and street trading

The pavement area in front of retail premises has long been an important space for the display of wares. Originally it was how shops started to trade, with goods hung across the front of the premises. Whilst this is a charming view of history, such practice today is not always practical or desirable.

Many of our town centres are packed with constraints across our pavements, moreover, the changing nature of goods we sell has shifted to include brightly coloured and disposable value goods and electronic equipment, the appearance of which detract from the character of our town and district centres.

The greatest change to our town centres is the influx of restaurants, take-a-ways and the café culture of modern Britain. This has resulted in proprietors utilising the street to promote business and expand trade through alfresco dining and street cafés.

The use of the pavement area in front of retail premises is generally encouraged. This must, in the first instance, be the subject of a licence, and secondly, that of a planning application to change the use of the land for this purpose.

Retaining and growing a vibrant environment in our town centres is important, however, must be designed so as to be of high quality and not impede on through traffic on

the thoroughfare. Along waterfronts, around open areas of public realm and in close proximity to cultural and civic areas of our towns and district centres pavement cafés will be positively encouraged.

A clear area should be defined and this should relate directly to the principal host premises and not extend across adjacent properties. It should not extend excessively onto the pavement and this will be determined by the width of the footpath, presence of pedestrianisation and the intensity of traffic (pedestrian as well as vehicular) in the area. The use of 'A' boards should only be allowed through a licence as these are a trip hazard and clutter the street scene.



### 3.10 Addressing flood risk

Flooding has become a significant material consideration within the planning process and all proposals must be mindful of:

- Walsall Unitary Development Plan: **Policy ENV40(e) (Conservation, Protection and Use of Water resources)**
- Black Country Core Strategy: **Policy ENV5 (Flood Risk, Sustainable Drainage Systems and Urban Heat Islands)**
- National Planning Policy Framework: **Section 10 - Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change**

Where applications for new shop fronts lie within flood zones 2, 3, or in an area of flood zone 1 with critical drainage problems, the National Planning Policy Framework advises that a Flood Risk Assessment should be submitted in support of the planning application. Note that the area at risk includes part of Walsall Town Centre.

Such applications should include design that reduces the risk of internal flooding.

The Environment Agency recommends one of the following mitigation measures:

Either;

Floor levels within the proposed development will be set no lower than existing levels and flood proofing of the proposed development has been incorporated where appropriate.

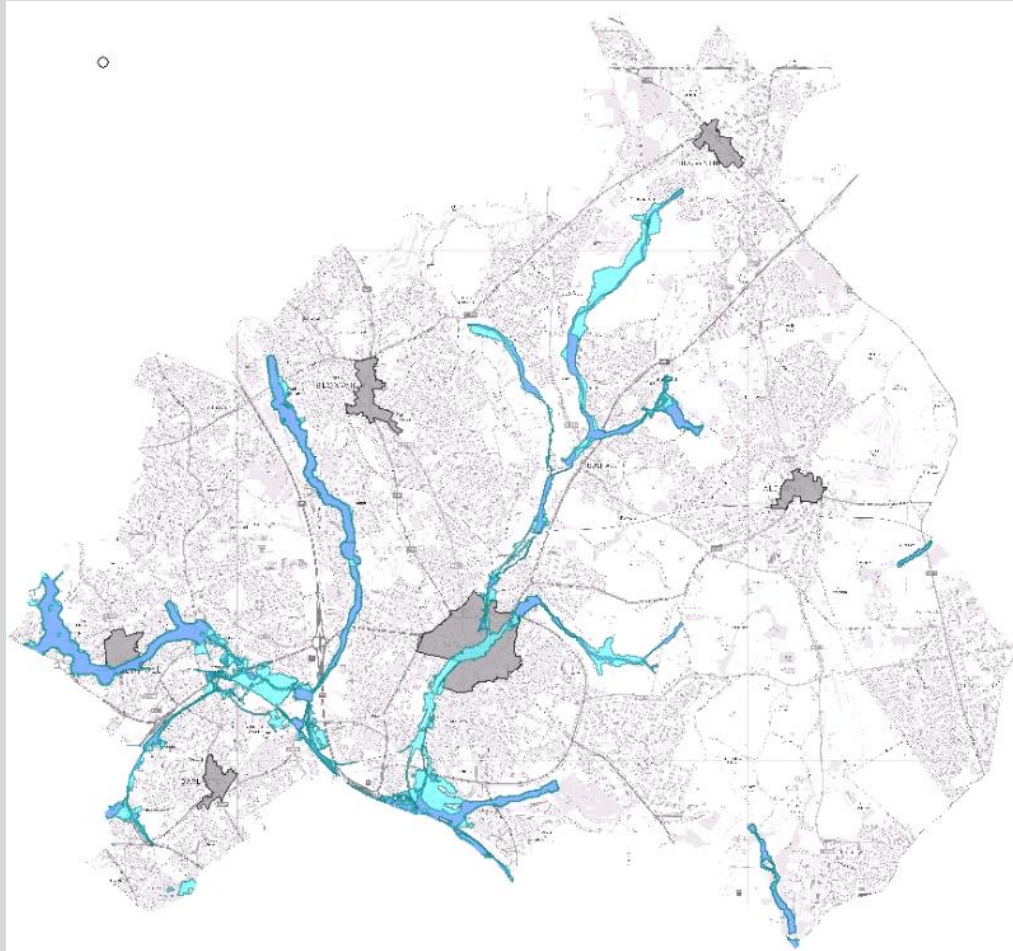
Or;

(where there is an extension or new building) floor levels will be set 300mm above the known or modeled 1 in 100 annual probability river flood (1%) in any year. The flood level is the extent of the flood zones.

In line with this guidance, changes to shop frontages that require planning permission within areas of flood risk should consider incorporating features (such as flood boards etc...) and sign up to a flood warning service (if available) as part of their application.

All flood resilience measures shall be sympathetic to any historical or architectural character of the building or wider area.

Figure 5 illustrates the areas across the borough that are at risk of flooding. This includes where this occurs in Walsall town centre and Willenhall, where it could potentially affect retail premises where flood defense may be necessary.



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*Figure 5: Flood risk zones across Walsall*



## Contacts

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## Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation Statement

A “consultation statement” is the statement prepared under regulation 12(a) of Part 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Such a statement sets out the requisite public participation undertaken prior to adoption.

Walsall’s Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2012) sets out the process by which this SPD has been adopted.

Figure 5 of the SCI states a 3 stage consultation process:

**Figure 5: The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) production process**

**Stage 1** (or the **pre-production stage**) involves us working with key partners, including the community, to gather evidence; data and information to support the SPDs.



**Stage 2 (Production and public participation stage)** involves producing the draft version of the SPD. It is important that all communities and other key partners are involved in influencing the document. This stage includes a consultation period whereby the document is/are available for a period of 4-6 weeks for comments to be submitted. If an SEA is required the assessment report will be published alongside the draft SPD. We then take into account the comments received and remain in dialogue with communities as we develop the final version of the document.



**Stage 3 (Adoption stage)** is adoption whereby the council formally adopts the SPD.

### Stage 1

A pre-production stage was not appropriate for this type of SPD as without the production of the draft SPD a consultation exercise on a design focused SPD

would likely be unsuccessful. Discussions were had with English Heritage who advised on good examples of adopted 'Shop Front Guidance' elsewhere.


## Stage 2


In accordance with regulation 13 and for the purpose of seeking representations copies of this statement and the Supplementary Planning Document were made available to those persons consulted in accordance with regulation 35.

In addition, Walsall's Planning Committee members specifically requested a leaflet was issues to all commercial premises in Walsall, Bloxwich, Aldridge, Darlaston and Willenhall, notifying building owners and tenants of the SPD.

Walsall draft

## Shop Front Supplementary Planning Document



 Walsall Council

**The council has drafted a new planning policy document concerned with improving the standard of shop front designs across the borough to assist in the continued regeneration of our town centres and other retail areas. The document will be under public consultation between 15 September through to 31 October 2014.**


Most shops, bars, restaurants and other premises with a shop front require planning permission to alter or construct a new shop front. This document seeks to set out the standard of works required when a planning application is submitted to the council to undertake such works to a shop front. It is therefore intended to assist owners in managing improvements to their premises.

Policies within the document look at the appropriate proportions of shop fronts, use of materials and colour finishes, as well as design of advertisements and security solutions, lighting and pavement cafes.

The full document can be reviewed on-line at [http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/local\\_development\\_framework/ldf\\_supplementary\\_planning\\_documents.htm](http://cms.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/local_development_framework/ldf_supplementary_planning_documents.htm) where a comments form can be submitted to the council. Alternatively, a paper copy can be viewed at Walsall's 'One Stop Shop' in the Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1DG.

Please contact Andrew Fuller by e-mail on [fullera@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:fullera@walsall.gov.uk) or by telephone on **01922 655537** should you have any further questions concerning this consultation process or the document itself.

**All comments must be received by 31 October 2014.**

 Walsall Council

The representations received are recorded below.

<p>The persons the local planning authority consulted when preparing the supplementary planning document.</p>	<p>English Heritage Environment Agency Natural England Walsall Disability Forum Walsall Civic Society Walsall Council Planning Committee Walsall Council Regeneration and Scrutiny Panel</p>
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	<p>West Midlands Police: Crime Reduction Team</p> <p>The general public</p>
<p>A summary of the main issues raised.</p>	<p><u>Security issues:</u></p> <p>Reference should be made in the plan to Secure By Design certificated grilles and shutters as preferred choice, they should be certified to LPS1175 security rating 2 (minimum) and installed in accordance with the manufacturers specifications. A link could be made to the Secure By Design website and a list of certificated companies that have secure by design on their shutters, grills etc.</p> <p><a href="http://www.securedbydesign.com/companies/companies.aspx?category=5&amp;standard_3=yes&amp;standard_4=yes&amp;standard_15=yes&amp;Search.x=73&amp;Search.y=11">http://www.securedbydesign.com/companies/companies.aspx?category=5&amp;standard_3=yes&amp;standard_4=yes&amp;standard_15=yes&amp;Search.x=73&amp;Search.y=11</a></p> <p><u>Disability issues:</u></p> <p>Concerned were raised over access into shops and would like to ensure there is access to shops using ramps, lifts and wide doorways etc where there are stairs, there were also comments about the use of a signage on the footpath that blocks access and is prone to collision with street users.</p> <p><u>Design issues:</u></p> <p>General support for imposing a degree of discipline on the necessarily individual actions taken by retailers et al to make their presence known and distinctive.</p> <p>Retaining some historical connections and architectural harmony is important.</p>

	<p><u>Flood risk</u></p> <p>Requirement for all changes to shop fronts that generate a planning application that fall within Flood Risk Areas Level 2 and 3 to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment and mitigation measures.</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <p>The document is a sound and comprehensive policy statement but needs to be policed to ensure it takes effect.</p>
How those issues have been addressed in the supplementary planning document	<p><u>Security issues:</u></p> <p>The consultation comments have been included into <b>Policy SF8: Shop front security</b>.</p> <p><u>Disability issues:</u></p> <p>The consultation comments have been included into <b>Policy SF5: Access to shops</b> and Section 3.9 <i>Pavement cafés and street trading</i>.</p> <p><u>Flood risk</u></p> <p>The consultation comments have resulted in the formation of a new section (3.10 <i>Addressing Flood risk</i>) that sets out the requirements of applications in Flood risk areas Level 2 and 3.</p> <p><u>Implementation</u></p> <p>The document will become part of the Council's Development Management teams breadth of policies that will be used to negotiate new shop front designs as well as take enforcement action</p>

	against unauthorised new development.
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### Stage 3

The date by which representations must be made (being not less than 4 weeks from the date the local planning authority complies with this paragraph):	31 <sup>st</sup> October 2014
The address to which consultations must be sent:	Andrew Fuller: Building Conservation Officer Civic Centre (Second Floor), Darwall Street, Walsall.WS1 1TW