



# SHOPFRONTS

## DESIGN GUIDE



Shopfronts represent an important element of our District's built environment. High quality traditional shopfronts survive in the spa town of Harrogate, the cathedral city of Ripon, the castle/market town of Knaresborough and the smaller towns of Boroughbridge, Pateley Bridge and Masham.

The Council's policy is to retain existing high quality shopfronts and to ensure a high standard of design in new ones. This guide amplifies Local Plan policies to provide supplementary advice: it does not seek to lay down over-rigid rules or to stifle genuine innovation.

CONSERVATION & DESIGN SECTION  
DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES,  
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*Harrogate*  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Introduction

**This design guidance has been the subject of public consultation and is supplementary to, and should be used in conjunction with, the policies of the Harrogate District Local Plan**

The triumph of the modern movement in architecture after World War II led to the widespread abandonment of traditional shopfront design and detailing in favour of over-deep fascias, plate-glass windows and unsympathetic materials such as plastic, aluminium, glazed tiles and mosaic. These have now largely had their day but, whilst timber has made a comeback, contemporary shopfronts are all too often poorly detailed and present a flat, uninspiring appearance. By imparting a greater understanding of the basic elements of shopfront design, Harrogate Borough Council seeks to remedy this situation. The Council will be particularly concerned to achieve a high standard of design where a shopfront forms part of a listed building or lies within a conservation area.

## Harrogate District Local Plan:

The Local Plan was adopted on 19 February 2001. Key policies relevant to the design of shopfronts are:

### POLICY HD21

**Proposals for new shopfronts will be permitted provided they meet the following criteria:**

- New shopfronts in existing buildings should be integrated with the general form of the building facade and its neighbours, respecting its proportions and details and using traditional materials. Every effort should be made to re-establish the original pilasters and fascias.
- Where a shop occupies more than one building shopfront fascias should not be carried across facades of separate architectural identity.
- Within conservation areas and on listed buildings shopfronts should generally be constructed of materials appropriate to the area or building, and be in accordance with policies HD1 and HD3 as appropriate.
- Existing high quality shopfronts of traditional design and materials should be retained.

### POLICY HD22

**Proposals to display advertisements should have regard to all the following criteria:**

- The size, design and number of any advertisements should respect the scale, character, design and location of the building and/or shopfront on which it is displayed, as well as the overall street scene.

- Advertisements will not be permitted where they would adversely affect the character or appearance of a listed building, conservation area or other sensitive location.
- Strict control over illuminated signs will be exercised, particularly on listed buildings and in conservation areas and other sensitive locations. Where illumination is acceptable, signs should be externally illuminated unless, in exceptional circumstances, the internal illumination is by individually illuminated or 'halo' lettering or other discreet method.
- canopy advertisements will not be permitted where they would adversely affect listed buildings, conservation areas or other sensitive locations.

Advertisements which have an adverse effect on amenity or public safety will not be permitted.



A shopfront well-related to the building of which it forms part.

## Shopfront Guidance available:

General Principles	SDG1
Elements of a Shopfront	SDG2
Georgian Shopfronts	SDG3
Victorian & Edwardian Shopfronts	SDG4
Blinds, Canopies & Security	SDG5
Lettering, Signs & Advertisements	SDG6
Illuminated Signs (approved jul '07)	SDG7

# History and Evolution of Shopfronts

**Shops evolved originally from freestanding market stalls. As towns developed during the middle ages, often following the granting of a charter conferring the right to hold a weekly market, burgages were created, initially around the market place. On these plots traders and craftsmen built houses fronting onto the street from which goods were sold. They usually had open frontages, protected at night by wooden shutters, with the goods displayed on a shelf which projected onto the street. Shutters continued to be a feature of shopfronts long after the advent of glazing. However, the development of the modern house-front with its front door and glazed windows led to the gradual evolution of the shopfront we know today.**

Shopfronts in the modern sense originated in the C18,



Ordinary domestic window with sign above.



Enlarged window, with emphasised surround.



Pilasters continued down to the ground.



Door given a surround to match the window (door & window are still separate elements).



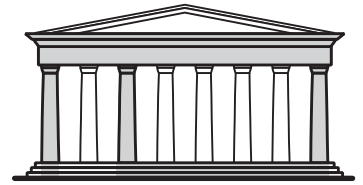
Doorway & shopfront coupled into one element.



Double fronted (any of the first four types could also be double fronted).

as a result of the greater availability of glass, and thus naturally followed the principles of classical design which dominated the architecture of the period. Indeed, the temple front, minus its pediment and most of its columns, became the basis of the shopfront and determined the proportions of its various elements:

the podium became the stallriser, the columns became pilasters, the architrave and cornice were retained, and the frieze became the fascia. Although the precise proportions of the classical orders (Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite), were rarely strictly followed, they provided a general guide to the proportional relationships between the different elements of the shopfront.

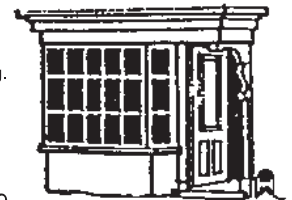


From the mid-C18 to the early C20, shopfronts evolved through styles broadly categorised as Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian (see Guidance Sheets SDG3 & 4). In spite of changing details, the same basic principles of design and proportion held good. Not until the mid-C20 and the triumph of the modern movement in architecture were these generally abandoned in favour of sparsely detailed designs in modern materials, often ill-proportioned and unrelieved by ornament or decoration. The tendency of high street multiples to impose standardised 'corporate images' on their shops, regardless of the character of the building or area compounded the problem. Moreover the scope for good design was limited by increasing standardisation in the manufacture of building components. Other problems affecting late C20 shopfronts have been the pressures of increased competition, leading to a desire for illuminated signage and plastic canopies, as well as increasing problems of security.

In recent years local planning authorities have encouraged a movement back towards traditional designs and materials. This Guidance seeks to help designers and architects create well-designed shopfronts, whether in a traditional or modern idiom.

## Late C18/early C19

Bay window to enclose goods previously set on pavement. Classical joinery features and detailing. Windows small-paned. These shopfronts often had external wooden shutters.

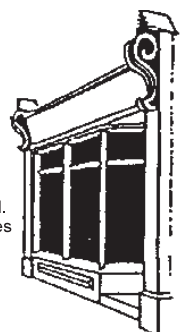


## Early - mid C19

Shopfront set on face of building so as not to obstruct public footpath. 'Bay' created for display by inseting the doorway, though doorway not always inset. Simple 'Greek Temple' shopfront surround is common. Larger panes of glass.

## Later C19/early C20

Development of console bracket form allows closer spacing of shops. Fascia given greater emphasis and often inclined. Mullions and transoms in lieu of glazing bars. Larger panes of glass. Development of freely exuberant forms.



# Ancillary Information

## Planning Legislation

The principal controls governing the replacement or alteration of shopfronts are embodied in the the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

## Listed Buildings

These are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as buildings of architectural or historic interest which have been included in a list compiled by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. The Council has records of listed buildings and can be consulted about the status of any particular building. The protection conferred by listing also covers any object or structure fixed to the building and any pre-1948 object or building within the curtilage. **It is a criminal offence to demolish, extend or alter a listed building without first having obtained listed building consent from the local authority.**

## Conservation Areas

These are defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as areas of special architectural or historic interest and have been designated by the Council with the aim of protecting, restoring and enhancing those elements which together make up the familiar and cherished local scene. There are additional controls in Conservation Areas relating to the demolition of buildings and walls and the carrying out of works to trees.

## Areas of Special Control of Advertisements

Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 a planning authority may designate an Area of Special Control (AOSC). Harrogate District has such an AOSC which was approved by the Secretary of State on 21 March 1994.

## What changes need permission?

Generally speaking, if a shop does not form part of a listed building, the shopfront may be redecorated and the signage changed without the need to obtain planning permission or advertisement consent. Only if the shopfront is to be altered or replaced, or where illuminated signage is involved, will permission be required. (In the AOSC more stringent restrictions apply.) However, if the building is listed, any alterations which would affect its character will require listed building consent. For full details, please contact the Council's Planning Division (Development Service or Conservation & Design).

## Making a Planning Application:

Specific advice on how to make a planning application is available in booklet form from the Planning Division. Fees are payable for planning applications. Location plans and scaled drawings, clearly showing the proposals, are required.

## Development Control Checklist:

This Design Guidance will be used by the Planning Division to assess applications. The summary below will assist agents in the preparation of applications and may reduce delays.

### i) **Have the shopfront, the full building elevation and those of adjoining properties been surveyed?**

### ii) **Has the shopfront design been devised to:**

- reflect and reinforce the appearance of the existing building/s?
- preserve valuable existing features?
- represent a confident and well-resolved design?
- have well-resolved details suitable to the style and materials to be employed?

### iii) **Has the signage been designed to:**

- clearly advertise the firm and business concerned in as discreet a manner as possible?
- be within these guidelines?

### iv) **Do the drawings clearly show:**

- any alteration to the existing shopfront or new construction?
- the position of signs, their construction and lettering?
- the means of illumination, where this is proposed?
- the colours proposed for the shopfront or signage? These should be specified in accordance with BS4800. If BS standard colours are not proposed, actual samples should be submitted.

**Early advice should be sought from the Planning Division after the initial site appraisal and survey has been carried out. Pre-application consultation can save much unnecessary re-design and frustration. Our aim is to assist you to produce a well-designed shopfront which will make a positive contribution to our District.**

**For further advice contact: Conservation & Design Section, Harrogate Borough Council, Department of Development Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate. HG1 2AE Tel: (01423) 500600**

These principles are broadly applicable to traditional shopfronts of all periods, but variations of scale and character will be appropriate in different places related to the status of the shopping centre and the scale of the building and its neighbours. More advice for shopfronts of particular periods is given in Guidance Sheets SDG3 and 4.

**Existing high quality shopfronts, dating from before the mid-C20 and of traditional design, should be retained whenever possible.**

Many traditional shopfronts embody workmanship and joinery skills which today may be hard to find and are of a quality meriting preservation in their own right. For example, it would take a highly skilled carver to reproduce an elaborate floral console bracket such as is often a feature of Victorian shopfronts. It is rare for a new retailer genuinely to need a completely new shopfront as much can be done by repainting and signage to create the new image and impact required. Indeed, a good quality, traditional shopfront can enhance the image of the business carried on there. Sometimes a largely original shopfront may be concealed behind more recent accretions. If these are carefully removed, the more or less intact remains of the original shopfront may be revealed and any missing details can then be restored.



17 James Street, Harrogate: a high quality shopfront, well-related to the building & based on original arcading which extended along the Hirst Terrace.

APPROVED MARCH 1999



14 High Street, Knaresborough: a recently restored early C19 shopfront

**A replacement shopfront should not normally appear to be older than the building of which it forms part.**

Shopfronts were often, indeed usually, added to buildings subsequent to their original construction. Thus, whilst a more recent design of shopfront on an older building looks perfectly natural, a Georgian shopfront on a Victorian building, for example, would normally appear unnatural and un-convincing. Very occasionally, circumstances may justify a departure from this general principle. Shopfronts do not necessarily have to be 'in period' and a good simple modern design is preferable to a feeble 'historic' one. Nevertheless, where a uniform terrace originally had identical or similar shopfronts and some of these have been lost or altered, it will be appropriate to encourage a 'block enhancement' scheme to restore or replace the altered shopfronts as closely as possible to their original design. Where no physical evidence remains on site, it may often be possible to reproduce an original shopfront on the basis of architectural drawings or old photographs.

**A shopfront should be well related to the building of which it forms part and to neighbouring shopfronts of traditional or good design.**

Within the shopfront there should be strong vertical elements to offer visual 'support' to the building above. Ideally, the shopfront should not extend for the full width of the building, allowing a strip of brick, stone or render (depending on the material of the elevation) to extend down to ground level on either side. This should be augmented by strong pilasters. However, it is not always possible to retain a strip of the facade to either side of the shopfront, in which case the importance of the pilasters is increased. An intermediate pilaster or pilasters (depending on whether the shopfront is single or double-fronted) will also help to provide such visual 'support'.

These various supporting elements help to ensure that the building appears to extend upwards from the ground and not float above a ground floor void. Similarly, there should normally be a reasonable gap between the top of the shopfront and the bottom of the first floor window cills to articulate the different elements of the facade.

**New shopfronts should normally be of timber construction, though in some locations other traditional materials, such as stone, may also be appropriate.**

Timber is the traditional material of shopfront construction, is cheaper than other high quality materials, lends itself to a wide variety of paint finishes and is capable of reproducing subtle mouldings and other detail. Existing stone shopfronts of traditional design, particularly where they incorporate carved decorative detail, should always be retained and stone may also lend itself to simple and elegant modern shopfronts in the case of 'prestigious' buildings and locations (e.g. in central Harrogate). Materials such as aluminium (unless anodised to a suitable dark colour), plastic and polished granite will rarely be suitable for shopfronts. Matching brick, stone or render may be suitable for stallrisers on brick, stone or rendered facades.



A well-proportioned "new traditional" shopfront with discreet signage

**The main elements of the shopfront should be in proportion to each other, broadly reflecting the proportions of the classical orders.**

This applies particularly to the stallriser, fascia and pilasters. The ratio of the height of the stallriser to the height of the overall shopfront should not exceed 20% and that of the entablature (the combination of cornice, fascia and architrave) should also not exceed 20%.



6 Cambridge Street, Harrogate: a fine Edwardian stone shopfront worthy of preservation



36 James Street, Harrogate: a simple, modern high quality shopfront with simple signage and well-integrated retractable awnings.

**Signage and security precautions should not exceed what is reasonably necessary to advertise the business and to give adequate protection against burglary and vandalism.**

Simple and restrained signs are often as effective in advertising a business as over-large or garish ones, particularly where several shops are in visual competition. Hand-painted lettering, e.g. in gold or white, can look extremely effective on a dark-painted timber fascia or hanging sign. The presumption should be against illuminated signs unless a particular need for illumination can be demonstrated. In such cases discreet external illumination will normally be preferred to internal illumination, though the latter can in some cases be acceptable if tastefully executed. On well-designed modern shopfronts 'halo' lighting, where individual letters are silhouetted against an illuminated background, or individually illuminated letters cut out of, or fixed to, an opaque fascia may be suitable.

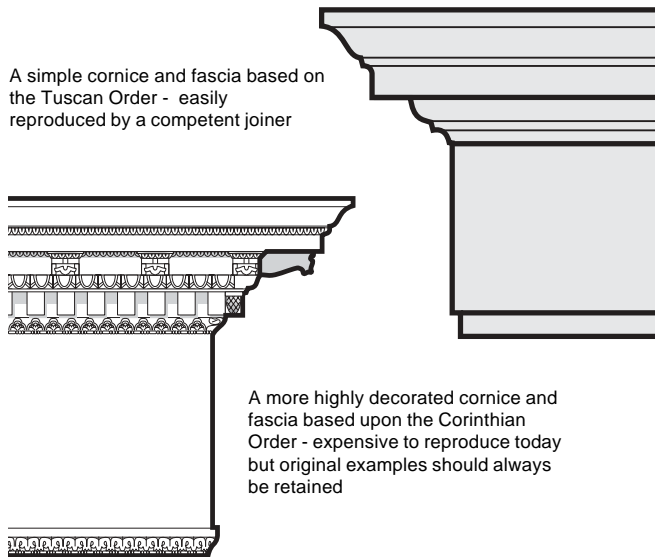
The modern use of canopies, frequently as vehicles for signage, is rarely necessary to protect the goods on display, usually detracts from the shopfront and the building as a whole and generally adds to visual clutter.

The need for security, beyond that provided by the shop window itself, is an unwelcome fact of modern life. Internal grilles or shutters do not require consent (unless installed in listed buildings) and, provided they are transparent, will normally be acceptable. External roller shutters are generally opaque, have a deadening effect on town centres and require planning consent, which will normally be refused (See Guidance Sheet SDG5). However, external shutters constructed primarily of transparent polycarbonate are now becoming available.

**Nothing said above should be taken to indicate that 'period' shopfronts are preferred to well-designed modern ones. If there are few illustrations of the latter, it is because good examples in Harrogate District are few and far between. The most important elements of a shopfront, of whatever period, are good proportions, details and materials. If this is borne in mind, and a modern shopfront relates well to the building to which it is attached, it will normally receive approval.**

**For further advice contact: Conservation & Design Section, Harrogate Borough Council, Department of Technical Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate. HG1 2AE Tel: (01423) 500600**

It is important to understand the relationship between the different elements which make up the shopfront. These are analysed below.



## Cornice, fascia & architrave (entablature)

The cornice is a particularly important element of the shopfront. Its function is to provide physical protection (by shedding water) as well as a visual stop. Cornices are normally made up of a number of horizontal 'run' mouldings, receding from top to bottom, usually separated by one or more flat, vertical faces. Often the cornice is 'supported' by tiny squared blocks (dentils) or larger curved brackets (modillions).

An important point to note is that, unless the entablature is enclosed at the ends by console brackets (see insert on Victorian shopfronts), then all mouldings, dentils and modillions continue as returns. The top of the cornice should have a shallow forward slope and a lead capping, dressed into the wall above, to shed water.

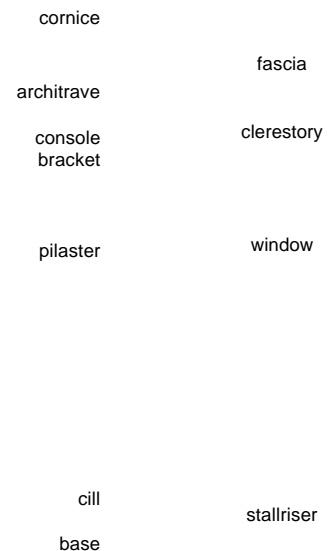
The fascia normally presents a smooth, flat surface to permit signwriting. Georgian and early Victorian shopfronts usually have vertical fascias. Later shopfronts (which were often higher, reflecting the increased height of later Victorian and Edwardian buildings) sometimes have the fascia angled downwards for greater visibility from pavement level. The height of the fascia should not exceed 10% of the overall height of the shopfront.

The architrave consists of a recessed plane or one or more horizontal mouldings whose function is to 'finish off' the bottom of the fascia.

## Window, glass, cill & stallriser

The design of the shop window evolved in response to technological advances in the manufacture of glass. In the C18 and early C19 glass was blown and spun into sheets of limited size (crown glass), characterised by a pleasing irregularity of surface which reflects the light in a most attractive way. (Crown glass, where it exists, should always be retained, being carefully removed and replaced where the shopfront needs repair. It is now possible to obtain replacement crown glass from a number of manufacturers.) This limitation of size gave rise to the small paned shopfront, analogous to the multi-paned sash window with which it is roughly contemporary, the main difference being that shop windows were glazed on the inside with the mouldings of their glazing bars facing outwards.

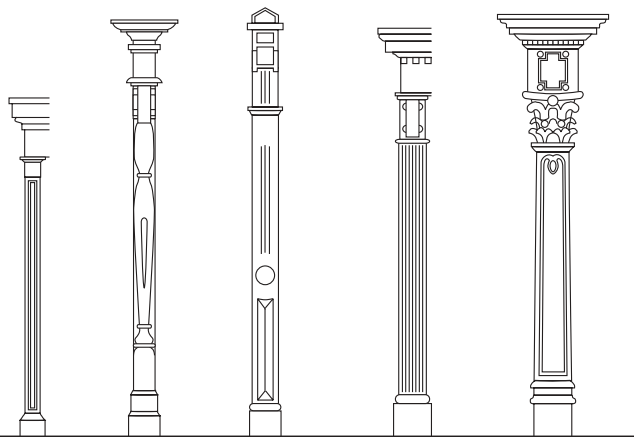
The 1820s saw the development of cylinder glass, which permitted larger panes, and the development of plate glass in the middle of the century allowed glazing bars to be eliminated altogether. The later C19 shop window was typically divided by vertical timber mullions, usually moulded, to give a number of full-height panes, although the upper part of the window might be divided off by a transom and given a more decorative treatment, such as elliptical arches or small leaded lights.



Details of a typical shopfront showing the relationship of the various elements

Cills should be robust. Their function is to provide a base to the shop window, to throw off water and, originally, to support the wooden shutters which provided security at night. They may have a similar profile to ordinary window cills or feature a variety of mouldings. More prestigious Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts often had cills topped with brass on which the name of the shop was engraved. On traditional shopfronts cills do not normally project beyond the face of any pilasters; this means, in other words, that pilasters should project well forward of the shop window.

The stallriser protects the base of the shopfront from kicks and splashes. Brick, stone or rendered stallrisers usually present a flat surface, though there may be a slightly projecting plinth below the main part. Timber stallrisers were normally of frame and panel construction, either raised and fielded or with the frame projecting forward of one or more central panels, the recess usually being covered by a moulded bead. This recess is important and the modern practice of forming the stallriser out of a single sheet of plywood with beading applied to an otherwise flat surface always looks wrong.



Pilasters showing variety of proportion and ornamentation

## Pilasters

The pilaster derives from the column. It encloses or gives visual support to the entablature (cornice, fascia and architrave) and to the building as whole. Traditionally made from solid timber, pilasters rarely exceed 300mm in width and may be as narrow as 100mm. Most lie within a range of 150-200mm. Normally presenting a flat face to the street, they may also take the form of an engaged (or, more rarely, freestanding) column. They usually stand on a slightly wider and deeper plinth and may terminate in either a capital or a console.

The face of the pilaster may be quite plain or feature a variety of ornamentation, such as recessed panelling, raised motifs, fluting or reeding. Modern pilasters are usually fabricated from plywood which frequently results in them being disproportionately wide, often with a few widely



Georgian: small paned bow windows, slender pilasters and engaged columns

spaced, routed grooves resulting in an unconvincing replica of proper fluting.

The majority of capitals are based on simple Tuscan or Doric models; where elaborately carved Ionic, Corinthian or Composite capitals exist they should be retained. Frequently pilasters are terminated not by capitals supporting the entablature but by console brackets enclosing it. Again, these often provide sophisticated examples of the carver's art.

## Doors & doorways

Traditionally, doorways were usually recessed. This provided protection from the elements for the customer and additional window display space, particularly in Edwardian shopfronts where the door was often set back a considerable distance. Architecturally, it helped to provide depth and interest. Sometimes in the Edwardian period the shopfront curved into the entrance and the floor might consist of tiles or mosaics, often incorporating the name of the shop. New shopfronts should, if at all possible, incorporate recessed doorways.



Victorian: full height panes divided by pilasters with consoles supporting the entablature

Occasionally the doorway may be found on the corner of a building, with the door angled at 45 degrees or, more rarely, curved. Whatever the position of the door, it should not be altered merely to tie in with proposed alterations to the internal layout of the building.

Doors themselves should normally reflect the character and period of the remainder of the shopfront. For example, the door of a Georgian shopfront with small-paned windows would probably have 3x3 panes above one or two panels below. The door of a later shopfront with plate glass windows would probably have deeper panes without glazing bars above a more boldly moulded panel. Later shopfronts often had double doors. Fanlights may be plain, incorporate domestic-type glazing bars or take their cue from any decorative detail in the upper part of the shop window itself.

Original doors should always be retained or replaced in replica. If the original door has disappeared and no photographic or other evidence exists, a suitable replacement door should be designed to reflect the shopfront as a whole. 'Off the peg' doors are rarely suitable.

The term 'Georgian' is here used loosely to describe shopfronts of the period dating roughly from 1750 to 1840. Shopfront design was not static during this period and individual elements evolved in response to changes in architectural fashion, but these variations are less apparent than the common characteristics which apply throughout the period. These are the strong influence of classical precedent, the relatively small scale of shopfront and the constraints on pane size imposed by the manufacturing processes for crown and, later, cylinder glass.

In plan, shop windows may be flat, have shallow bows, square or canted bays, flat fronts with curved ends or even elaborate serpentine profiles. Bows and bays are usually continued down to the ground with stallrisers of the same profile but may overhang a flat stallriser, in which case they may be supported on brackets. Comparatively few Georgian shopfronts remain in Harrogate District. Two notable examples are in Knaresborough, at 14 and 48 High Street, and are double-fronted with bow windows to either side of the doorway. Such remaining examples of windows projecting onto or above the footway should be carefully conserved, particularly as this is no longer permitted under the Highways Acts.



48 High Street, Knaresborough: detail



48 High Street, Knaresborough: one of the finest shopfronts in the District, although somewhat spoilt by the advertising board above the cornice.



7 Westgate, Ripon: a Regency shopfront

The entablature (cornice, frieze and architrave) normally incorporates classical mouldings and details, and returns at each end. It will usually be supported by classical pilasters or engaged columns or, more rarely, by free-standing columns. These are most likely to be based on simple Tuscan or Doric precedent, since these do not involve elaborate capitals. Where elaborate Ionic, Corinthian or Composite capitals are found, these should always be retained and carefully repaired, if necessary. In Harrogate Town there are many examples of such capitals constructed in stone. The Regency period (1810-1830) saw the introduction of a simplified form of classicism, with pilasters, often reeded, intersecting a fascia of the same width (height), the squares at the corners occupied by roundels or paterae.

Shop windows are invariably subdivided into a number of panes by timber glazing bars. This is due to the limited pane size that was possible with crown or cylinder glass. In the earlier part of the period, pane sizes are quite small, similar to those of ordinary sash windows, but, unlike the latter, the profiled glazing bars face outwards and are puttied on the inside. Crown glass has a very pleasing irregularity of surface due to the manufacturing process which reflects the light in a most attractive way. It should always be retained and carefully removed and re-used when a shopfront is being repaired. Later on, the development of cylinder glass permitted an increase in pane size, requiring the use of thicker glazing bars. Occasionally, the upper part of the shop window may be given a decorative treatment, perhaps with a pattern of glazing bars resembling the fanlight over the door, but this is comparatively rare and is more usually a feature of later Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts.

Doorways are usually recessed behind the face of the shop window, generally set behind the facade of the building if the shopfront is flat, or in line with the facade if there are projecting bays. The pattern of glazing bars in the upper part of the door typically resembles those of the shop window. The lower third or two fifths of the door usually features one or more raised and fielded panels. Fanlights, as with ordinary houses of the period, exhibit a wide variety of designs. Glazing bars may be of timber or, to achieve greater delicacy and fineness, of painted lead. Regency doors may have marginal lights, reflecting the simple intersecting fascia and pilasters of the shopfront as a whole.



16 Market Place, Knaresborough: probably the oldest surviving shopfront in the District

**For further advice contact: Conservation & Design Section, Harrogate Borough Council, Department of Technical Services, Knapping Mount, West Grove Road, Harrogate. HG1 2AE Tel: (01423) 500600**

# VICTORIAN & EDWARDIAN SHOPFRONTS

The development of plate glass in the middle of the C19 and the repeal of the excise duty on glass in 1845 gave rise to much larger shop windows, uninterrupted by glazing bars. Shopfronts as a whole became larger and chunkier. Much of the delicacy which characterised Georgian and Regency shopfronts was lost, but Victorian shopfronts have their own distinct and robust character, equally meriting preservation and repair where they remain. Whilst still loosely following classical precedent, Victorian shopfronts and their Edwardian successors drew inspiration from a variety of sources.

The main characteristics of Victorian shopfronts are:

- an increase in the height, width and depth of shop windows
- unbroken glazing from cill to architrave but windows divided vertically by timber mullions, sometimes taking the form of thin colonnettes or terminating in elliptical heads
- the Georgian shopfront with its entablature supported by pilasters is frequently replaced by pilasters terminating in console brackets enclosing the fascia
- roller blind boxes are often incorporated as an integral part of the design
- a greater variety of materials, especially in higher class shops
- shop doors are usually four-panelled with the upper panels glazed or with the whole of the upper part glazed.



9 Kirkgate, Ripon: one of a row of similar Victorian shopfronts.



Elaborately carved console brackets: a typical feature of Victorian shopfronts.

The chief glory of Victorian shopfronts is often the elaborately carved console brackets enclosing the fascia. These represent highly sophisticated examples of the carver's art. They often survive more or less intact behind later 'clagged on' plywood fascias. Where they do exist, as with highly decorated capitals on Georgian shopfronts, they should always be retained and, where necessary, carefully repaired.

In the 1880s and 1890s there was a reaction against what was perceived as the ponderousness of mid-Victorian design. This manifested itself in the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements, the Queen Anne revival in architecture, a mania for all things Japanese and a general striving after 'sweetness and light'. Trends in domestic architecture carried over into shopfront design. For example, the fashion for having the upper sash of a window divided into very small panes was echoed in the decoration of the upper part of the shop window (clerestory) with small panes, leaded lights, arcading or curvilinear forms. These trends led to the type of shopfront that we characterise as 'Edwardian', although they often predate the accession of Edward VII in 1901.



9 Albert Street, Harrogate: an unusual combination of stone piers and timber entablature.

Typical characteristics of Edwardian shopfronts are:

- very tall shopfronts, often accompanied by a reduction in the height the stallriser and of the fascia, which may be angled downwards for greater visibility
- stallrisers in 'hard' materials to resist wear
- simplification of the console brackets, sometimes taking the form of fluted 'bookends'
- much thinner pilasters, which may in some cases be omitted altogether
- decorative treatment of the clerestory and fanlight
- deeply recessed doorways, sometimes with the thresholds in mosaic to advertise the name of the shop, decorated soffits and curved glass instead of a corner between the doorway and the frontage
- doors almost totally glazed, often with marginal lights and with only a small panelled area at the bottom, the latter robustly fielded
- cills covered with brass on which the name of the shop is inscribed.



50/52 Parliament Street, Harrogate: an Edwardian shopfront incorporating many typical features.

**It must be emphasised that not all of these features are found on every shopfront; some will only be found on the grandest examples and many shopfronts will combine different elements which can be characterised as Victorian or Edwardian.**

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The original function of blinds was to protect perishable goods from deterioration due to strong sunlight. This applied particularly to foodstuffs, but also to other items such as textiles and books which are liable to fade if exposed to the sun. They also helped to keep the interior cool, whilst projecting blinds helped to protect passers-by (and potential customers) from the rain.

Early blinds took the form of simple roller or curtain blinds and probably came in during the C18. They might be hung either outside or inside the shop window. Projecting roller blinds (of the type we now think of as traditional) go back to the late C18 and were originally housed in a box mounted above the cornice. Around the middle of the C19 the box was integrated into the shopfront itself. Projecting roller blinds have the great advantage, practical and visual, of forming an integral part of the shopfront and of being retractable when not required. They form an attractive component of many traditional shopfronts and generally merit preservation where they remain.



An example of good modern blind design



a poorly designed canopy, unrelated to the building

In recent years projecting roller blinds have often been replaced by so-called Dutch canopies. These form a quadrant in section with the material (usually plastic but sometimes canvas) stretched over a metal frame beneath. The ends may be flat or curved. They are theoretically retractable but are usually left in place to advertise the shop concerned. Usually fixed below the fascia, they present a three-dimensional appearance which can obscure the proportions and detail of the shopfront itself, as well as spoiling the rhythm of a terrace. They often serve little practical purpose (beyond the function of advertising) and their use is discouraged by the Council.

The legal position in regard to Dutch canopies is that, if not used for advertising purposes, they constitute 'development' and normally require planning consent; if they carry signage or advertising, they require consent under the Advertisement Regulations. Where the building concerned is listed, listed building consent will be required and would normally be refused.

## Security

Sadly, the need to provide additional security to retail premises has become an inescapable fact of modern life. Where once the main threat was the smash-and-grab, today it is supplemented by the ram-raid and the problem is no longer confined to high value/low bulk goods such as jewellery but affects many other types of retailer. Late-night vandalism resulting in broken shop windows may be almost as much of a problem as the actual theft of merchandise. The Council appreciates the dilemma facing many retailers and their insurers, but wishes to maintain town centres which are attractive to evening window-shoppers and to the general public. A town centre where a high proportion of shop windows are hidden behind solid roller shutters has little to attract people in the evening and its very emptiness may encourage criminal activity. They also give thieves who may have broken in at the rear of the premises a 'clear run' unobserved from the street.

Commonly employed security measures are described below, together with the Council's attitude towards them.

Various types of strengthened glass may be employed to give added security, including safety (toughened) glass, laminated glass, anti-bandit glass and security film applied to the inside of the glass. All these will normally be acceptable to the Council, with the proviso that security film should be uncoloured, except where they would detract from the character of an historic shopfront or historic glass would be lost.

Traditional lifting wooden shutters (increasingly rare) and purpose-made grilles (illustrated below) remain a practical means of providing security where the shopfront can be made to receive them. Although the former completely obscure the window display, they are unlikely to be widely adopted and, as a traditional shopfront element, are normally acceptable to the Council. (Planning consent is required for external grilles and shutters.)



Open grilles maintain the interest of town centres and permit window shopping at night

Modern roller security grilles are frequently fitted behind the shop window. These are commonly 'open', often with a pattern resembling stretcher-bond brickwork. Another type presents a solid appearance when seen in daylight but the metal surface is finely perforated, enabling the interior of the shop, if lit, to be clearly seen at night through the shutter. The main problem with the latter is on summer evenings when the shop is shut and the grille lowered but it remains light outside, when the effect will be of a solid shutter. The Council will normally have no objection to 'open' type grilles. The perforated type may be acceptable in particular circumstances. It is important with all internal security grilles that the roller mechanism is concealed behind the fascia so that the retracted shutter is invisible from the street.



More recently, some manufacturers have begun to produce external roller shutters constructed of sections of polycarbonate linked by aluminium rods. This gives a high degree of transparency and will normally be acceptable, provided there is no projecting box.

Some external roller shutters completely obscure the window display, presenting a totally blank appearance to the street. Whilst protecting the glass itself as well as the merchandise, such shutters have a deadening effect on the appearance of shopping areas. They always require planning consent and will not normally receive approval.

**The general principle is that, except in the case of listed buildings (where any security measures apart from strengthened glass are likely to require listed building consent), any shutters installed behind the glass do not require planning consent. External shutters *do* require consent. Nonetheless, for the reasons given above, the Council would hope that retailers proposing to install security measures will discuss their proposals with its planning staff in an attempt to agree a mutually acceptable proposal.**

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(This guidance sheet should be read in conjunction with SDG7 'Illuminated Signs'.)

Unlike the replacement or alteration of shopfronts (which always constitutes 'development' and thus requires planning consent) most signage, unless illuminated, enjoys 'deemed consent' under the Advertisement Regulations\*. However, in the case of listed buildings, new signage which would affect the character or appearance of the building will require listed building consent.

Local planning authorities can designate Areas of Special Control which further restrict the categories of deemed consent. Harrogate District has such an area which, broadly, covers the whole District including all rural areas, the Stray and Valley Gardens in Harrogate, the riverside and the Castle grounds in Knaresborough and the Cathedral precinct in Ripon. The town centres of Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon are excluded.

\* Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992



Simple signage to an Edwardian shopfront

All outdoor advertisements have a visual impact and the advertisement control system is intended to help all concerned to make a positive contribution to the environment. Retailers must appreciate that their corporate images may not always be appropriate without modification, whilst local



A shopfront with hand painted lettering

planning authorities must accept that adequate signage is essential in the competitive environment of modern retailing.

Where shopfronts are of painted timber - in most cases the preferred material for new shopfronts - the best form of signage will usually be hand painted lettering in a traditional typeface.

Where a shopfront is very tall, or some other reason makes the fascia unsuitable for signwriting, suitably sized and proportioned lettering painted directly onto the inside of the shop window may be appropriate.

The next best solution is separate cut-out letters fixed individually to the fascia. Traditionally made of wood or bronze, today they are more likely to be fabricated from plastic. Provided they present a matt appearance and are in a suitable colour, such lettering will usually be acceptable. Whole fascias of plastic, whether or not illuminated, are not generally acceptable.

It would be undesirable to be too prescriptive as regards the choice of lettering as variety makes for visual interest and liveliness in town centres. However, where there is no established corporate image involved, a serif style of lettering (such as on 'Laura Ashley') is probably more appropriate on a traditional shopfront: a sans serif style (such as 'Churchills') on a modern shopfront or where it is desired to project a modern image. Unduly "fancy" lettering, or lettering which is not clearly legible, defeats its own object and is best avoided.

The height of fascia lettering will normally be determined by that of the fascia itself and should normally be between a third and half the height of the fascia and centred about its horizontal axis. This gives a *minimum* of one third void, one

third lettering, and one third void or a *maximum* of a quarter void, a half lettering and a quarter void. Anything larger or smaller than this is likely to look either too large or insignificant in relation to the space available.

Similarly, there should always be a reasonable space at each end of the fascia so that the lettering does not appear "squashed in". Lettering is normally centred about the vertical axis of the fascia although there may be cases where it is desired to 'justify' it to left or right (usually with a view to creating a more 'modern' image or to focus attention on the entrance - as at 'Churchills' - see photograph overleaf) and there is not necessarily any objection to this. These guidelines will normally determine the size of lettering employed on a traditionally proportioned shopfront. However in the case of modern shopfronts with over-deep fascias, this rule of thumb does not apply and the height of lettering should not exceed 375mm (15 inches).

Signs should not be displayed on gable ends nor, apart from projecting signs, above the level of first floor window cills. (In these cases consent will be required.) The overall number of signs displayed on a building should be such as to avoid giving a cluttered appearance to the building itself or to the overall street scene.



Traditional hanging signs forming part of a unified scheme

Strict control is exercised over projecting signs. Advertisements should relate to the trade being carried out in the premises rather than for particular products sold. Generally only one projecting sign on each shop will be permitted and it should be located so that it relates satisfactorily to the rest of the shopfront and building and does not obscure views from windows or views of existing signs to an unreasonable extent. Projecting 'box' signs, whether or not illuminated, present an ungainly appearance and are rarely appropriate.



Individually attached lettering

In areas where traditional shopfronts predominate, light coloured lettering on a dark background is preferable. Large areas of bright colours are inappropriate for shopfronts in much of the Harrogate District

Except where otherwise indicated, non illuminated signage does not normally require consent under the Advertisement Regulations but retailers are encouraged to exercise restraint in regard to the colour, size and design of lettering, rather than to engage in uninhibited visual competition with their neighbours. It is open to the Council to issue a Discontinuance Notice where it considers that an advertisement is seriously injurious to amenity.

The Council will seek the highest standards of design and appearance in respect of listed buildings, in Conservation Areas and in Areas of Special Control and the vast majority of shops in the District are likely to fall into one of the above categories. The exceptions are suburban shops in Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon outside the Conservation Areas. In these locations the Council may take a slightly more relaxed attitude.



Signage on glass in the absence of a fascia

**The Council recognises the essential commercial function of advertisements; the intention of its policies is to control the size, number and type of advertisements and to seek improvements to their design, in the interests of amenity, without damaging the viability of shops.**

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As indicated in Guidance Sheet SDG6, most types of non-illuminated sign enjoy 'deemed consent' under the Advertisement Regulations. This does not generally apply to illuminated signs, for which in most cases an advertisement application must be made. Government policy on advertising is contained in PPG 19 *Outdoor Advertisement Control*. The Council's policy with regard to the display of illuminated signs (contained in Policy HD22) is set out under the heading of 'Harrogate District Local Plan' on the first page of this Design Guide.

This states that:

*'Strict control over illuminated signs will be exercised, particularly on listed buildings and in conservation areas, residential areas, rural areas and other sensitive locations. Where illumination is acceptable, signs should be externally illuminated unless, in exceptional circumstances, the internal illumination is by individually illuminated or 'halo' lettering or other discreet method.'*

The impact of an illuminated sign upon 'amenity' in any particular case is not always easy to assess. All too often the character and appearance of shopping areas can suffer from a competitive rivalry in the matter of illumination, as different shops in a street feel the need 'to keep up with the Jones's', particularly if they are in direct competition with regard to the products sold.



An illuminated traditional hanging sign.

However, it would be unrealistic to refuse all applications for illuminated signs, particularly in a buoyant town centre such as Harrogate. Town centre retailers would no doubt argue that they are in competition, not merely with each other but with out-of-town developments and that a degree of illumination has a part to play in maintaining the attractiveness and vitality of town centre shopping. For this reason, it is likely that a policy which aimed to refuse consent for all illuminated signs would be unsustainable on appeal. Conversely, Harrogate is

perhaps the most 'up market' shopping centre in the region, whilst Knaresborough and Ripon are important historic towns, and it is therefore important to reinforce these qualities by setting clear guidelines and limits as to what is acceptable in terms of illuminated signage.



External spotlit fascia.

## Types of illumination

In recent years, fashions in signage have moved on and the internal illumination of entire fascias and projecting box signs is unacceptable anywhere in the Harrogate District. More acceptable methods of illumination are:

### External

where the fascia or hanging sign is illuminated by spotlights.

### Advantages

Overall, the least intrusive method of illumination. Probably the most satisfactory and discreet method of fascia illumination is by small, projecting halogen fittings above the fascia which should normally be painted either black or the same colour as the fascia itself. In the case of traditional hanging signs, these can often be discreetly illuminated from below with small halogen spotlights mounted on top of the cornice of the shopfront. Alternatively, halogen fittings projecting from the mounting bracket can be used. This is the only method of illumination which is compatible with traditional shopfronts and hand painted lettering and is probably the least intrusive during daylight hours.



Externally illuminated fascia.

### Disadvantages

The light fittings required for illumination can often appear crude and obtrusive in themselves. The worst offenders in this respect are swan neck fittings, especially those finished in brass. A continuous trough above the fascia is not generally favoured as these are difficult to integrate into a traditional fascia and cornice. They may be more suitable where a new shopfront is proposed and the trough is an integral part of the design. However, troughs are usually used to house fluorescent tubes which tend to give a rather cold and harsh light. At night, where the whole fascia is uniformly illuminated, this can overly concentrate attention on the ground floor of a building, with the result that the upper floors are 'lost', thus detracting from the architecture of the building as a whole. Accordingly, troughs will not normally be permitted.



Boots the Chemist internally illuminated sign.

## Internal

where individual letters are either fret cut out of an opaque box or mounted individually on the fascia.

### Advantages

Fret cut lettering and individually mounted letters, preferably with only their front faces illuminated, can look quite neat and are not excessively obtrusive.

### Disadvantages

In the case of fascia signs, fret cut lettering would require a 'box' to be mounted on the existing fascia and so is suitable only where the whole shopfront is of modern design and the box can be integrated within it. It would not be suitable as a 'bolt-on' to a traditional shopfront, partly because the whole box would project and also because an anodised aluminium box would be visually incompatible with a timber fascia. It would not normally be suitable for projecting signs as it would require a box sign rather than the more preferable traditional hanging sign. Individual letters present a generally similar appearance at night and may be easier to integrate

into an existing shopfront, though the electrical wiring may be difficult to incorporate neatly. However, individually attached illuminated letters would also normally look rather out of place on a traditional, timber shopfront.



An example of halo lighting.

## 'Halo'

involving individual letters with solid fronts and sides but open at the rear, where the light is reflected onto the fascia and presents the letters in silhouette.

### Advantages

One of the most discreet methods of illuminating fascia lettering, it is likely to be acceptable in many locations.

### Disadvantages

As with internally illuminated lettering, 'halo' lettering is more suited to a new or modern shopfront where it can be fully integrated into the design, rather than to a traditional, timber shopfront where, in daylight, the lettering may appear 'heavy' and incongruous.

## Policies for different shopping areas

Different parts of the Harrogate District have their own distinctive character. With regard to the main towns of the District, there are clear differences between Harrogate, with its principally Victorian/Edwardian character, the much older market towns of Knaresborough and Ripon, and the smaller towns of Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge. It is thus possible to identify a hierarchy of locations, in each of which different criteria for the illumination of signs should apply. These are set out in the table below, which specifies the locations where the different guidelines apply and sets out the considerations and policy which apply in them. These should be read in conjunction with the general comments on different types of illumination made in the preceding section.

## Location

## Considerations

## Policy on illumination

The principal shopping streets of Central Harrogate, essentially the area covered by Policy S2 on the Harrogate District Local Plan Proposals Map, but excluding the Montpellier Quarter, Low Harrogate and Prince Albert Row.

In Harrogate Conservation Area. Some listed buildings.

Harrogate is a buoyant shopping centre and prides itself on the up-market nature of its shops. Any signage should contribute to maintaining that image.

The following types of illuminated signs will normally be acceptable, subject to detail and to the character of the building and shopfront:

**Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs; 'halo' lettering to fascias.**

Internally illuminated signs, particularly those involving illumination of the whole fascia will not normally be permitted.

The specialised shopping streets of the Montpellier Quarter, Low Harrogate and Prince Albert Row, dominated by antique shops and other specialised 'up market' retailers.

In Harrogate Conservation Area. Many listed buildings.

In Low Harrogate, many of the buildings are listed and/or have high quality traditional shopfronts.

There should be a general presumption against illumination unless a strong case can be made in particular circumstances. In such cases, illumination should be limited to:

**Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs; 'halo' lettering to fascias.**

Internally illuminated signs will not be permitted.

Other shopping streets outside Harrogate Town Centre, including High Harrogate, Cold Bath Road and Kings Road.

Although secondary shopping areas, High Harrogate, Cold Bath Road and Kings Road are nevertheless within Harrogate Conservation Area.

Illumination should normally be limited to:

**Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs; 'halo' lettering to fascias.**

In exceptional cases, the following may be permitted:

**Internal illumination of individual letters to fascias.**

The town centres of Knaresborough and Ripon (as defined by Policy S2 of the Harrogate District Local Plan).

In Knaresborough and Ripon Conservation Areas. Many listed buildings.

The centres of Knaresborough and Ripon are much older than Harrogate, buildings on the whole are smaller and a high proportion are listed. Some good traditional shopfronts remain. Both towns have benefited from extensive CAP funding in recent years and Ripon has also benefited from SRB funding, part of which was focused specifically on improvements to shopfronts.

To avoid detracting from their historic character and recent and future improvements, any illumination should be limited to:

**Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs.**



A discreetly illuminated hanging sign.

Location	Considerations	Policy on illumination
Suburban shops in Harrogate, Knaresborough and Ripon.	May impact on residential areas.	<p>These are less sensitive than the historic town centres of the District and the shops fulfil a more local need.</p> <p>Subject to there being no adverse impact on residential amenity, the following will normally be acceptable:</p> <p><b>Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs; 'halo' lettering to fascias.</b></p> <p>In exceptional cases, the following may be permitted:</p> <p><b>The internal illumination of individual letters to fascias.</b></p>
Shopping streets/areas in Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge	In Boroughbridge, Masham and Pateley Bridge Conservation Areas. Many listed buildings.	<p>The centres of the three small towns are sensitive historic locations. Boroughbridge has experienced considerable regeneration in recent years. Pateley Bridge is a developing tourist and service centre for the Nidderdale AONB and is likely to experience further grant-aided regeneration. Masham Market Place remains one of the gems of the District.</p> <p>To safeguard these recent improvements and the established character of these small towns, there will be a presumption against illuminated signs. If, in exceptional circumstances, a case for illumination can be made out, this should be limited to:</p> <p><b>Discreet external illumination of fascias and hanging signs; 'halo' lettering to fascias.</b></p>
Village shops and 'corner' shops in residential areas.	Some villages are conservation areas.	Illumination of signs in the context of a village or residential area is rarely likely to be justified, particularly in a conservation area, and applications will normally be refused.



Illuminated internal fascias and halo lighting, Harrogate.

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