

Final Version



Preston Shopfront Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Adopted December 2017



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1.0 Introduction / Purpose of the SPD

- 1.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to provide design guidance relating to the repair, maintenance or installation of shopfronts in Preston. A coordinated approach to shopfront design across Preston will enhance the appearance of the built environment and help to provide an effective marketing tool for promoting the historic parts of the City to visitors and investors alike. Shopfronts can be broadly categorised as contemporary or older, more traditional design types dating from Georgian or Victorian periods which can frequently be found in Conservation Areas such as Winckley Square, Avenham, Fishergate Hill, Fulwood and Ashton.
- 1.2 This guidance covers the design of both traditional (preferred approach) and modern shopfront designs. The broad structure of this document is summarised below:
- Summary of policy
 - Design principles
 - Components of a (traditional) shopfront
 - Traditional shopfront design guidance
 - Modern shopfront design guidance
 - Applying for planning permission
 - Further information / advice

2.0 Planning Policy ¹

Although SPDs do not form part of the development plan, once adopted the SPD will be afforded significant weight as a material consideration in the decision making process, providing more certainty to developers for proposals which comply with the Council's vision and adopted policies.

A summary of relevant policies is given below (not exhaustive). Please refer to the weblink further below for full policy information. ¹

Adopted Central Lancashire Core Strategy July 2012

- Policy 11: Retail and Town Centre Uses and Business Based Tourism
- Policy 16: Heritage Assets

Adopted Preston Local Plan 2012-26

- EN8: Development & Heritage Assets
- EN9: Design of New Development

Adopted Preston City Centre Area Action Plan

¹ For full policies and guidance please refer to planning policy weblink here:
<http://www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/planning/planning-policy/>

3.0 Design Principles

With regard to older shops and particularly those which relate to properties within Conservation Areas or those which are listed, restoration or reinstatement of period features or the entire shop front is strongly encouraged.

3.1 A summary of key design principles is given below and expanded throughout this guide:

- a)** Shopfronts that harm the appearance of an area through inappropriate design or the use of unsympathetic security measures will be resisted. In determining applications account will be taken of the following:
- the scale, proportion and overall design of a shopfront with regard to the building of which it forms a part;
 - any contribution and visual impact on the surrounding townscape and streetscene;
 - safe and convenient access for all people including disabled people.
- b)** The introduction or replacement of signs or other additions should:
- adopt a scale, detail and siting appropriate to the character and detail of the buildings.
 - the design or siting should not constitute a traffic hazard.
 - Form a sensitive addition to the streetscene

3.2 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

Higher standards and more consideration towards aesthetics and design are expected with regard to Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas. The historic environment contributes to the enjoyment of life in the City and provides a unique sense of place as well as supporting wider economic, cultural, social and environmental benefits. Once harmed, buildings and places lose their significance. Proposals affecting a heritage asset or its setting will only be permitted if they conform with Policy EN8 (Preston Local Plan 2012-26)

3.3 Restore or Renew

Proposals involving the total or substantial loss of a heritage asset (for example a Georgian or Victorian shopfront) or the loss of elements that contribute to its historic or architectural significance (for example, decorative tiling or glasswork) would in most cases be refused.

The guidance outlined in the next sections is applicable to all shopfronts: - both traditional – (which is the preferred approach) and modern shopfront design.

4.0 Components of a (traditional) shopfront

Traditional shopfronts typically incorporate timber, either hardwood or softwood which make up the various components of a traditional shopfront such as doors, frame, fascia, mullions, transoms and pilasters (see [Fig.1](#) below).

Stall-risers make up the gap between the bottom of the window and the pavement and are typically built up of timber, red brick or stone. They support and balance the other elements of the shopfront design as well as providing a raised platform for the window display.



Fig.1 (above): Components of a (traditional) shopfront. [Source: Fife]

4.1 Traditional shopfronts (pre 1919) design guidance

If the development affects the design or setting of existing traditional shopping street frontages the Council will encourage proposals which are compatible with the style, character and form of the building and the character of the street scene in line with Policy. Key elements to consider are expanded below (applicable to **all** shopfront):

4.2 Windows

Original moulded frames are an important part of the historic fabric and should be retained and featured through sympathetic reinstatement where possible. Similarly original glazing with hand painted lettering should be retained in any shopfront design. If this is not possible, it could be carefully removed and made into a feature inside the property. In some cases the use of mullions and transoms to subdivide glazing into smaller units could be considered, subject to its design being appropriate to the scale of the shopfront and the wider setting in the streetscape. (Continued.....)

4.2 Windows (continued)

The size, proportion, sub division etc of the windows which make up the display area are a critical element within the design of a shopfront. In the main, large plate glass windows should be avoided as they produce a less interesting treatment that can then be produced with only minor changes to the design.

Generally, when replacing a shopfront in an older building, you should divide large areas of plate glass with well-designed vertical glazing bars and introduce some additional interest at the head of the window, eg arched transoms or smaller panes etc.

The design of shopfronts should relate to the upper floors and enhance the streetscene (summarised in *Fig. 2* below)

Fig. 2 (below): Shopfronts: Good and bad (unacceptable) practice summary

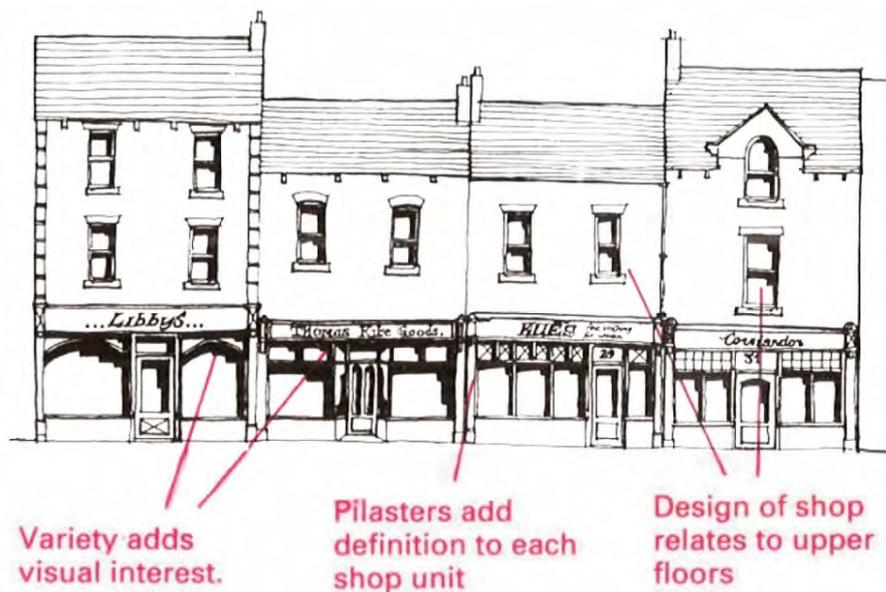


Fig.2.1 (Left) – shopfronts: good practice



Fig.2.2 (Left) – shopfronts: bad practice (unacceptable)

4.3 Fascia boards and graphics

Fascia: The horizontal board fixed between the top of the pilasters and running the full width over doorway and window. The scale and design of the fascia should be appropriate to the character, height and period of the building and in proportion to the shop front. **Excessively deep fascia's should be avoided.** Existing stone or timber cornices should not be destroyed or adapted to accommodate new signage. Instead effort should be put into a design which emphasises those architectural features.

On a traditional shop front, a well-designed fascia board will assist in attracting footfall and help in 'selling' to potential customers. Furthermore it could potentially improve the end value in a future property sale.

On Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas the timber fascia board would normally be decorated with gilded or hand painted individual lettering using strong colours on a dark background. Letters or symbols mounted onto fascias may be considered appropriate if it can be demonstrated that they respect the heritage asset.

The use of plastic, perspex or similar materials incorporated into fascia signs in conservation areas or on listed buildings is rarely appropriate. Temporary banners will always need consent on listed buildings and in conservation areas. They are generally to be discouraged given that their fixings will be invasive to historic brickwork and stonework and have a negative visual impact in the wider streetscape (*see good + bad practice examples below*).



Above: fascia boards/signage - good practice



Above – overly large fascia boards/signage - bad practice (unacceptable)

4.4 Hanging Signs

These are features of a traditional streetscape and can increase the visual appeal of a shop giving it an increased profile from some distance away. Hanging signs which denote the trade of the shop, for example a teapot for a café or a bicycle for a bicycle shop can provide extra interest. If appropriate in terms of visual amenity, one hanging sign is normally acceptable. The sign should be of a size not to be over intrusive, and able to relate to others in the vicinity.

Hanging signs should be no higher than fascia level unless the historic/original sign was located higher or there are other positive design benefits. Signage should be restrained and enhance the street scene.



Hanging signs - good practice

4.5 Doors

The design of the door and doorway are critical in achieving a successful replacement shopfront. It is often worth keeping features like entrance recesses unless removal is absolutely necessary, because these improve the visual quality of the shopfront. If you do need to move your door forward it is essential that careful attention is paid to the design of the door itself and to the relationship of the doorframe to the adjacent window(s).

Traditional panelled doors should be retained where possible with design, material and colour of door, window and shop front design complementing each other. Likewise the design of fanlights located above the door should be integrated fully into the design.

- 4.6 Recessed entrance:** Traditional shop fronts frequently incorporated a recessed entrance providing shelter to anyone using the door. The floor areas were often finished with mosaic or similar tiles whose designs often provided clues to the historic use of the shop. In a modern day context these historic features add interest to the shop front design and can provide additional visual appeal to any shopfront by being retained and repaired if necessary.



Above – good recessed entrance doorways/features. Retain and repair whenever possible

4.7 Columns and pilasters:

These project slightly from the shop front providing visual definition and physical support to the building façade. They form the boundary between adjacent shops emphasising the division of the street into distinctly different properties which have developed over time.

In some cases the pilasters framing the shopfront can be seen to run through the upper floor of the property. If this is the case, the pilasters of the shop should be positioned so as to line up properly with the upper floors (see [Fig 2](#) further above).

- 4.8 Corbels:** The corbel forms the head of the pilaster and frames the fascia board. It is usually the most decorative feature of a traditional shopfront but simple timber corbels can be equally effective.

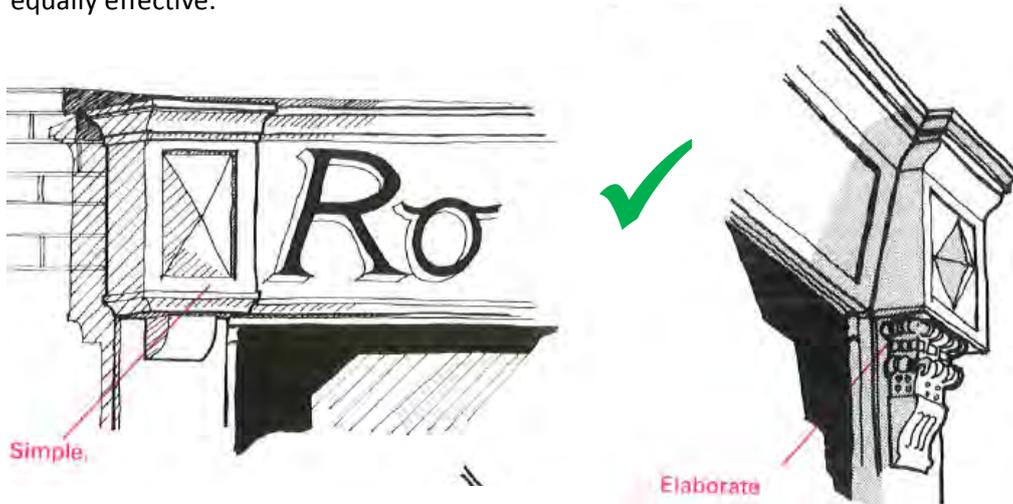


Fig 3 (above) – Corbels are an important decorative feature

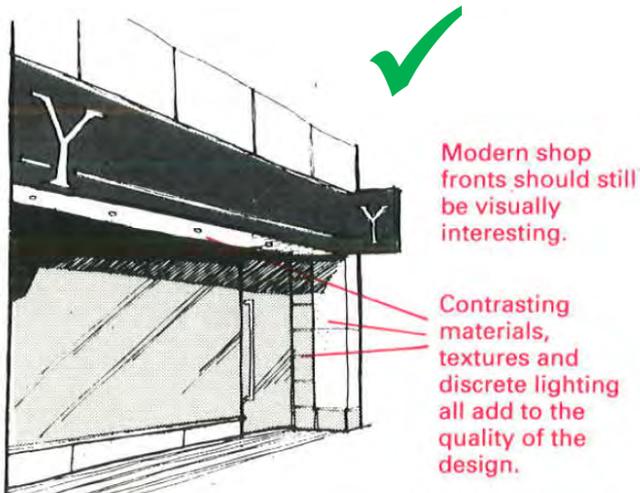
- 4.9 Cornice:** These can particularly be seen on older shop frontages fitted just above the top of the fascia board and forming a slight overhang which acts as a run off in reducing the amount of water onto the fascia board.
- 4.10 Canopies:** Canopies can add visual interest to a shopfront if well integrated into the overall design. See good examples below (note well integrated retractable canopies):



Well-designed retractable canopies

5.0 Modern (post 1919) shopfronts

Contemporary shop fronts come in many designs and materials but they are generally inappropriate for use in older properties unless they are very carefully designed with skill and attention. It is rare for simple UPVC or aluminium window frames to form an attractive and eye catching design and this has resulted in many shop owners placing either plastic “eye-lid” canopies over their display windows in a bid to attract attention or, worse still, mounting plastic, back illuminated box signs directly onto the shop fascia (unacceptable).



If you decide to pursue a modern design it should be clean and simple but introduce enough visual interest to remove the need for cheap and visually intrusive advertisement.

Fig 4 (Left) – Modern shopfront design principles.

Below/right – good practice examples



Above: Contrasting modern shop front treatments to similar adjoining units. The accumulation of relatively small differences to the unit on left resulting in poor overall design quality [source: Fife].

6.0 Colour schemes

Greater consideration towards aesthetics is normally expected with regard to Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas. Careful selection of colours is important. Restrained shades of maroon, dark green, dark blue, brown and grey are more suitable. In such settings bright colours may often appear 'garish' and require more cleaning. The painting of masonry and brickwork should be avoided and instead its natural finish should be retained. Non breathable masonry paints can damage stonework by preventing moisture from escaping from it in a natural drying out process and should be avoided. Synthetic materials such as plastic or acrylic will not be acceptable.

7.0 Security (eg. shutters)

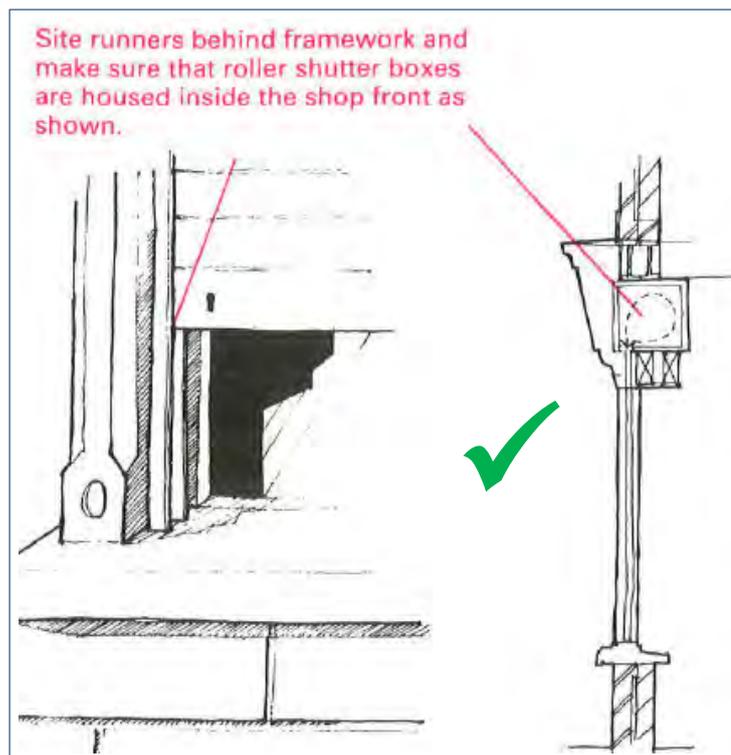
Security should be 'designed-in' as part of the overall design of the shopfront rather than added at a later date. In this way it is possible to maintain the visibility of the window display and protect the character of the premises and the streetscape. The use of internal security screens will be supported; particularly those fitted behind the shop window and with a vertically opening lattice arrangement (see examples below).

Alternatively, solid wooden shuttering with a hinged opening or demountable type may be considered subject to its design and colour scheme complementing the existing shop front and it can be installed without detriment to existing architectural features.

Whilst the Council is willing to negotiate on individual cases, the following design types **should be avoided**: External solid close panelled metal shuttering and external metal shuttering with pinhole, perforated or punched-hole slat type. Likewise shuttering which incorporates external roller boxes which cannot be reasonably incorporated into shop front/fascia design without spoiling the appearance of the frontage will not be acceptable.

Where roller shutters are required, provision should be made in the design of the shopfront to mount the box housing itself... it must not be externally mounted (see **Fig. 5** right and examples further below).

Fig.5 (right): shutters
good practice



7.1 Roller Shutters – good practice examples:



7.2 Roller Shutters – bad (unacceptable) practice examples:



8.0 Lighting and other frontage elements

Internally illuminated box signs, hanging and projecting boxes will not be permitted in a Conservation Area or on Listed Buildings. Existing street lighting should be considered as the primary method of illumination in such situations. The need for other lighting must be justified and will be considered on a case by case basis.

Likewise any other additions to a shopfront need to be justified and carefully considered so they enhance the building and wider street scene.

9.0 Disabled Access

The City Council is very keen to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are protected. Therefore all new shops must conform to The Equality Act 2010 and to the provisions of the current Building Regulations, as must changes to a shopfront requiring amendments to the existing point of access.

Building Regulations state that reasonable provision must be made for people to gain access to and use the building and its facilities. Wherever possible a level, accessible entrance should be provided in order to not present a barrier for wheelchair users.

- 9.1** If any advice is required regarding the access to and use of a building in conjunction with a building regulations application then please contact Preston City Council Building Control on 01772 906913 or by email at buildingcontrol@preston.gov.uk

10.0 Applying for Planning Permission

Planning permission is required for any alteration or change which materially affects the appearance of a building (such as the shopfront).

Advertisement Consent, Listed Building Consent and Building Regulations Approval are other consents that may also be required when carrying out works.

- 10.1** For further information please refer to the PCC website: <http://www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/planning/planning-applications/apply-for-planning-permission/>

General Planning Support Tel: 01772 906912

11.0 References

- Bristol City Council, Shopfront Guidelines
- Fife Shop front Design guidelines
- Rossendale Borough Council, Shopfront Design Guide SPD, May 2012

12.0 Further information

- Summary of city centre investment opportunities: <http://www.prestonguildcity.com/invest/>
- Business support: <http://www.preston.gov.uk/businesses/business-advice/>
- Business finance and grants: <http://www.preston.gov.uk/businesses/business-advice/business-support-finance/>
- Winckley Square Townscape Heritage initiative (THI): <http://www.prestonguildcity.com/invest/key-project-areas/winckley/winckley/>
- New Hall Lane Shopfront Loan Scheme (as of Sep 2017): <http://www.lancashirelep.co.uk/city-deal/near-you/preston-city-centre/new-hall-lane.aspx>

Shop front improvement loan scheme

Friends of Fishwick and St Matthews are promoting a shop front improvement loan exclusively for New Hall Lane businesses in the shopping area between Acregate and Heaton Street. The loan is to be used for the repair or replacement of any part of the shop front including windows, doors, shutters, security and signage.

An interest free loan between £500 and £5000 is available with no fees and is repayable over 6-36 months. Any owner occupier, landlord or tenant over the age of 18 can apply for the loan.

If you would like more information or to apply for a loan then please contact Lancashire Community Finance on 01772 556877 or call in to their office at 4 Fleet Street, Preston, PR1 2UT.

- Shopfront Design Guide SPD webpage/updates: www.preston.gov.uk/shopfrontguide



Below: Other Good practice examples

