

# Guide to design detail

Shopfront design encompasses a wide variety of styles and details but certain basic rules apply everywhere. To be successful new shopfronts need not necessarily be imitations of traditional design. The Council will give sympathetic consideration to alter, extend, or provide new shopfronts if they comply with the guidelines contained in this document.

**1** A shopfront should not be designed in isolation but **considered as part of the architectural composition** of the building.

**2** The design should **complement the period and style** of the building.

**3** Shopfront elements should **emphasise the division** of the building and **visually suggest a method of support** for the facade above.

**4** Shops operating from more than one adjacent unit should **retain the subdivision** of the shop fronts to **respect the integrity of the individual buildings**.

# Design Principles



1. Retain, repair and reinstate original and historic shop fronts whenever possible.

2. The architecture of the whole building and its neighbours should inform the alteration of an existing or the design of a new shop front. Shop fronts should not overwhelm the architecture of the building.

3. Each new shopfront should be designed individually and be based on good design principles, which are consistent with the scale and appearance of the building.

4. Avoid undo horizontal emphasis, which can often conflict with any vertical design character evident in the upper floors. A good design will use vertical elements (pilasters, mullions, door frames) and horizontal components (fascia, stallriser and cornice) to produce pleasing proportions appropriate both to the building and the rhythm of the elevations in the street.

5. A shopfront design should not aim to unite buildings of different architectural styles but rather be conceived so as to reflect their originality.

6. In historic areas, define the shop front by ensuring it has a clearly established frame incorporating a cornice, fascia, pilasters and a stallriser. Keep the various elements in scale and proportion to each other. In particular try not to make the fascia too large or the pilasters too wide.

7. Modern designs are more likely to be considered acceptable in contemporary buildings, existing buildings with little demonstrable architectural character, or outside historic areas. However, they must always be of a high design standard, utilise clear notions of scale and proportion, and use appropriate materials in relation to the wider elevation and street scene.

8. Poorly conceived features such as undivided plate glass, excessively deep fascias, inappropriate materials and crude joinery details should be designed out when shopfront alterations are being considered.

9. Strong consideration should be given to modifying standardised corporate designs in order to harmonise with the streetscape. This is especially the case where attractive original shopfronts survive, and in historic areas.

10. Use appropriate materials and details that are sensitive to the street scene and are easily maintained. Accurate and authentic detail is essential if awkward unconvincing designs are to be avoided.

11. Make the signage clear and simple.

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# A Shopfront Design Guide.

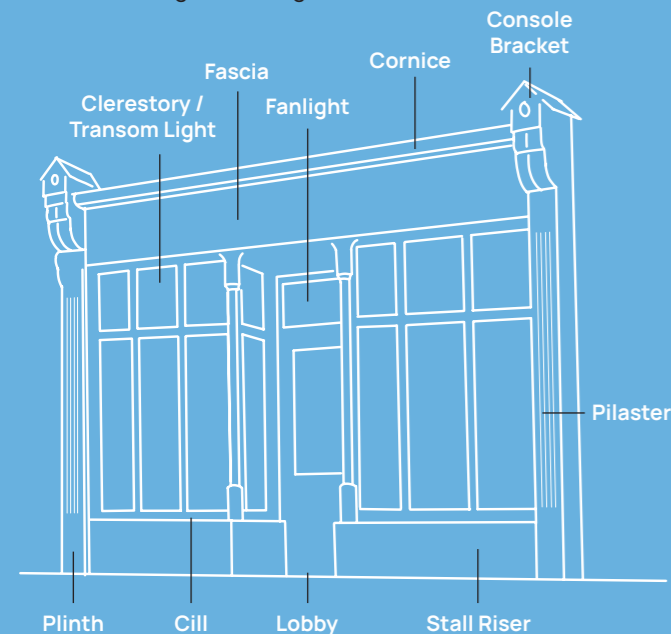


# What is a Shopfront?

Basic architectural design elements of a traditional shopfront. A shopfront normally incorporates certain key elements within its design, regardless of the period of its construction.

Traditional shop fronts which include these general principles are particularly good at achieving a successful and sympathetic relationship between the shop front and the building. It should be noted that these principles are not just restricted to shop fronts on historic buildings or within areas of historic interest. The main purpose of a shop front is to display goods for sale, and to provide access to the premises.

Although variations in style are limitless, common elements can be identified. The following terms will be used throughout this guide.



**1. Cornice:** The top section of the fascia which marks the division between the shop and the building above. It may be decorated or plain, is usually of stone or timber, and it may have a protective layer of lead.

**2. Fascia:** A horizontal board below the cornice on which lettering is located to signify the business.

**3. Console Brackets:** A decorative feature used to mark the termination of one shop and the beginning of another. The bracket may be classical in inspiration but many are stylized in design and do not follow classical principles.

**4. Fanlight:** A glazed light situated above a door, often square or rectangular in shape. The glass may be plain or decorative. Some may be of a hopper type which is bottom hinged and opens inwards to allow ventilation to the shop.

**5. Pilaster:** An applied decorative feature in the form of a column which projects slightly from the wall but is generally not structural in nature. It may be plain or decorated, often with fluting or reeding, which can be of timber or stone.

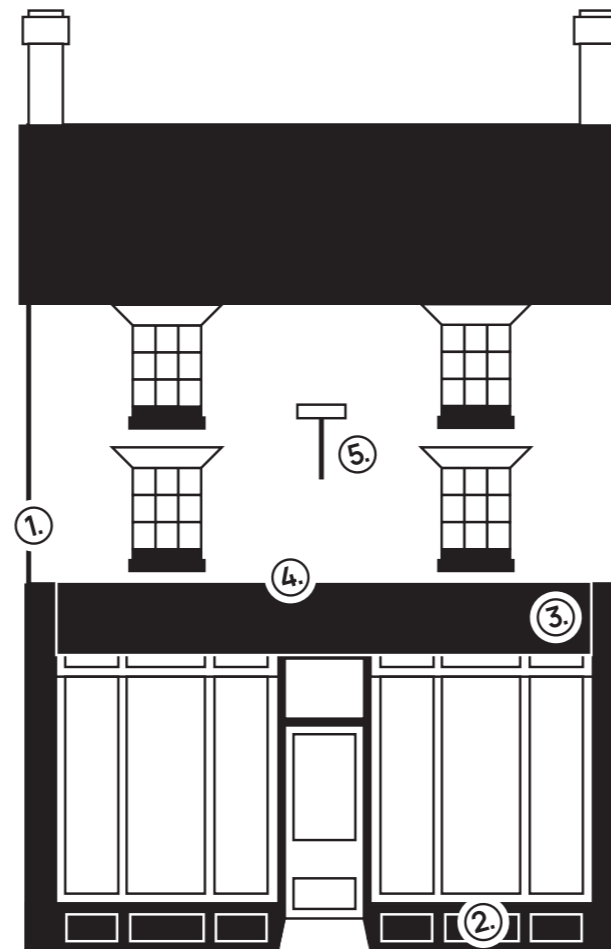
**6. Plinth:** Base of a pilaster usually of stone or timber.

**7. Lobby:** A small recessed area at the front of a shop leading to the shop doorway. It may have a decorative floor, and the walls and ceiling may be panelled or may incorporate a showcase.

**8. Stall Riser:** The vertical area between the sill and ground level. It may be decorative or plain, often in timber.

# Good Design

The shopfront design in the illustration below is far more sensitive in terms of both its proportions and detailing and in relation to the front elevation of the building, for the following reasons:



1. The design introduces a pleasing balance of vertical and horizontal elements, with glazing panels that possess proportions that are more in sympathy with the arrangement and shape of the openings above.

2. The pilasters and stallriser are of sufficient thickness to help frame the window and give it strong definition.

3. The fascia is well proportioned, framed by the capitals on top of the pilasters, and set well below the first floor windows. The much sturdier appearance helps to give the impression of supporting the masonry above.

4. The introduction of a well moulded cornice above the fascia, which is similar in style to the moulding at the eaves and around the upper windows, helps to integrate the new front onto the building.

5. The lettering style to the fascia is refined and complementary while the hanging sign is well proportioned and similarly scripted.

# Bad Design

The illustration below shows a new shop front that has been fitted into an early 19th century building. The design for the shopfront can be said to have failed to respect the context of the original building and introduced poor design elements in a number of ways, including the following:



1. The lack of strong vertical components leads to an inappropriate horizontal emphasis, in an elevation with significant vertical interest in its upper floors.

2. All of the framing elements are excessively thin in section and there is no attempt at providing the appearance of any support for the upper floors.

3. The design uses large common square areas of plate glass that do not relate well to the vertically proportioned windows above. This combines with the lack of framing to create the impression of a dark void over which the stonework appears to float.

4. The lack of any stallriser or vertical surrounds such as pilasters further harms the proportioning and framing of the shop front.

5. The fascia is excessively tall and no attempt has been made to provide it with any framing elements or moulded cornice and so it gives the impression of being a flimsy applied component, rather than part of an integral design. It also harms the architecture of the building by obscuring the sills of the first floor windows.

6. The roller shutter box appears almost as an afterthought. It protrudes awkwardly and reduces the amount of natural light that can enter the shop.

7. The illuminated box sign above the door is both cumbersome and unnecessary and harms the architectural integrity of the elevation above.