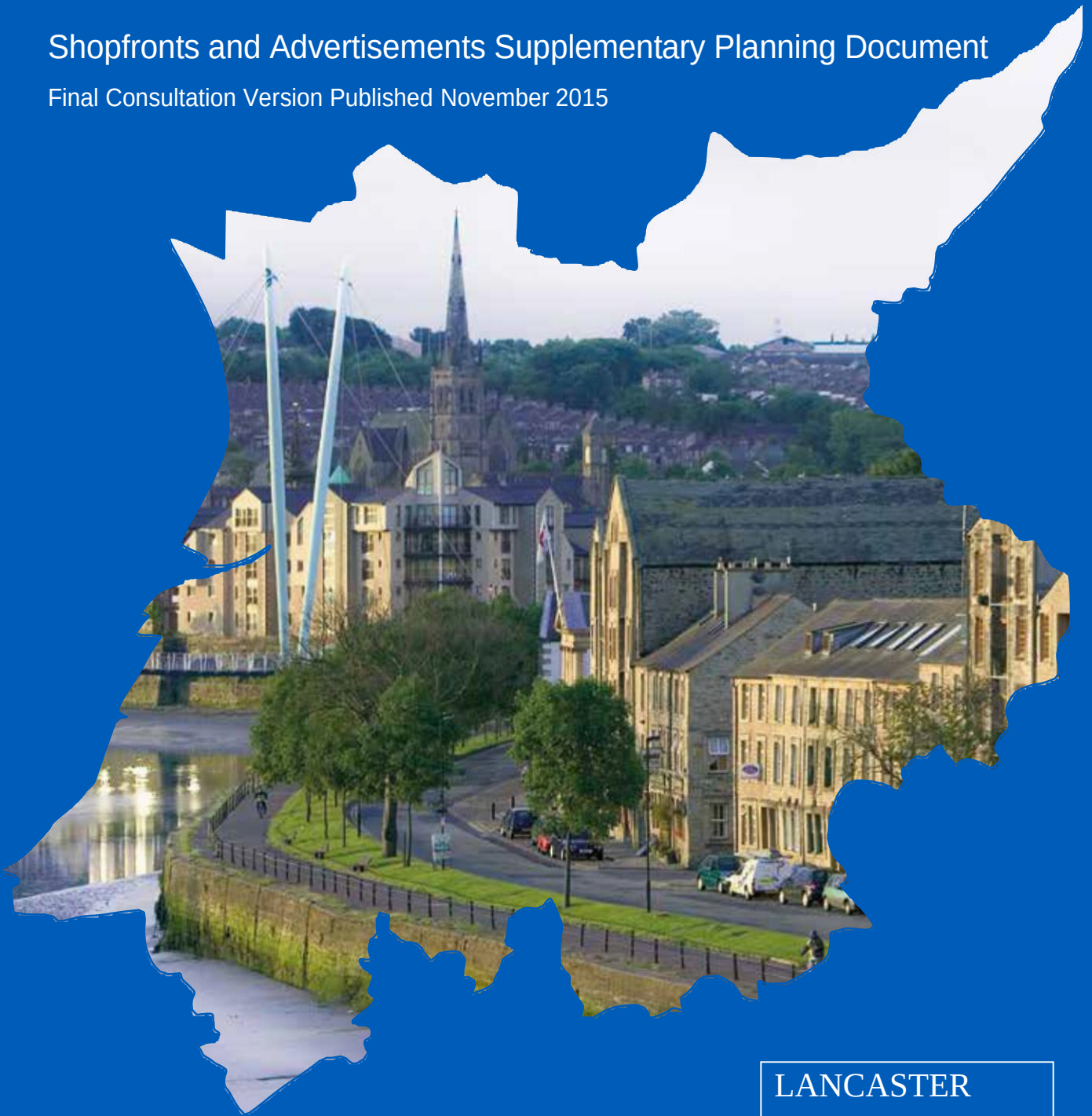


A Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011-2031

Shopfronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document

Final Consultation Version Published November 2015



LANCASTER

CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

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Foreword

- i. Lancaster City Council are consulting on this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in relation to Shopfronts and Advertisements. The Council will welcome comments and representation on this SPD for a six week period, commencing on Monday 9th November and concluding at 5pm on **Friday 18th December 2015**.
- ii. The SPD, along with any other relevant background information is available on the Council's website, at www.lancaster.gov.uk/planningpolicy and hard copies are available at both Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls. Any further information and advice on this matter please do not hesitate to contact the Planning and Housing Policy Team on planningpolicy@lancaster.gov.uk or 01524 582383.

1. Background

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Lancaster City Council to supplement policy set out in Policy DM6 (Advertisements) and Policy DM35 (Design) of the Development Management DPD, adopted in December 2014, to provide further guidance in relation to advertisements and shopfronts.
- 1.2 This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will assist anyone proposing to install, alter or replace a shopfront or advertisement anywhere within Lancaster district. This SPD applies not only to A1 retail uses but also the following use types:
 - Restaurants and Food & Drinks; and
 - Financial and Professional Services
- 1.3 Developers are advised to discuss proposals for new shopfronts and advertisements in historic areas (such as conservation areas) with the City Council's Conservation Team at an early stage. Historic areas will include premises within Conservation Areas or that are either designated or non-designated heritage assets.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Most public ground floor frontages are occupied by shops and other commercial property. Shopfronts are the most prominent element of many buildings. The appearance of shopfronts and advertisements can have a major impact on the character of Conservation Areas and other areas which are designated for their visual importance within Lancaster District, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whether this impact is beneficial or harmful is dependent on the quality and sensitivity of the designs used.
- 2.2 Retailers and businesses have a strong preference for standard 'house' styles and colours. These interests must be balanced with the need to protect and enhance the unique qualities of Lancaster District. Experience has shown that with a flexible approach, together with an emphasis on good design and quality, including and the use of traditional detailing in Conservation Areas, corporate image can be adapted.

- 2.3 The Districts' shopping streets are varied and constantly changing. This diversity and dynamism is part of the character. This SPD does not therefore prescribe specific styles and materials. Good modern shopfronts can complement the building and street in which they are set if they are sensitively related to them. It is however important to observe certain basic principles in order to retain and enhance the character and amenity of the locality.

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 Almost all proposals for new shopfronts, alterations to existing shopfronts and replacement shopfronts require planning permission. Alterations to Listed Buildings will additionally require Listed Building Consent.
- 3.2 Nearly all illuminated signs and many other signs will require Advertisement Consent. If you are proposing to erect an advertisement sign, you should check with Lancaster City Council's Development Management Team whether you will have to apply to the Council for Advertisement Consent.
- 3.3 Some forms of advertisement are permitted for display without the Planning Authority's specific approval known as 'Deemed Consent'. Guidance, on those forms of advertisement that benefit from Deemed Consent, is available in the Communities and Local Government publication 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers' (June 2007).

National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 3.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) suggests that good design remains a key requirement of new development, of particular reference is the following paragraphs:

'Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.'

Paragraph 17

'The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making better places for people.'

Paragraph 56

'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 public safety, taking account of cumulative impact.'

Paragraph 67

Local Planning Policy

- 3.5 The Development Management DPD contains policies which are of relevance to proposals related to advertisements, this includes:
- Policy DM6 (Advertisements);
 - Policy DM28 (Development and Landscape Impact)
 - Policy DM30 (Development affecting Listed Buildings);
 - Policy DM31 (Development affecting Conservation Areas); and
 - Policy DM35 (Key Design Principles).
- 3.6 These policies, along with other relevant elements of the Local Plan for Lancaster District 2011 - 2031 should be read in conjunction with this Supplementary Planning Document in relation to proposals for advertisement and shopfronts.

4. Shopfronts – Design Principles

- 4.1 This section sets out the key design principles that proposals for advertisements and alternations to new and existing shopfronts should address.
- 4.2 Many proposals for shopfronts will be for premises which are located within a Conservation Area (in particular Lancaster City Centre, Morecambe Town Centre and Carnforth Town Centre). Whilst these design principles are key to proposals located within these areas, the advice should equally be applied to shopfront proposals across the district.

Retention of Existing Shopfronts

- 4.3 Where an existing shopfront positively contributes to the character of the building or area, there will be a presumption in favour of its retention. Any loss requires clear and convincing justification. It may not be necessarily obvious whether a shopfront or feature is of importance. Should the premises be located within a Conservation Area then specialist advice should be sought from the Council's Conservation Team before undertaking any work on a historic shopfront and no work should be undertaken on any shopfront until planning permission is granted.



4.4 Very few early shopfronts survive. Special care is needed to ensure that these are preserved and restored in a sensitive manner. Sometimes original features such as pilasters and fascias have been hidden by later work and can be revealed and restored.

Replacement of Shopfronts

4.5 Some shopfronts may not be capable of retention because of their physical condition or their suitability to change. The replacement of modern shopfronts that do not incorporate traditional features has positive benefits, large plate glass windows, excessively deep fascias, crude

joinery and unsuitable materials such as unpainted tropical hardwood or aluminium should be replaced with more appropriate designs and materials.

- 4.6 A shopfront should be integrated into the building that it is part of. It should respect the period and style of the building. It should not attempt to divorce the ground floor from the rest of the building or over emphasise the fascia. This can often occur if a deep fascia is used.
- 4.7 Most shopping streets in the District contain a variety of buildings styles and shopfronts dating from different eras. Shopfront design should reflect the characteristics of the street with a variety of different building styles except in terraces of several shopfronts within a single building or building groups.



5. Principles of Good Shopfront Design

5.1 Many of the District's buildings date from the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century. During this period shopfront design sought to achieve a successful relationship between the shopfront itself and the building as a whole. Some adaption may be necessary to take account of technological change but such original features should be retained where possible. The key

principles that should be applied to new shopfronts are set out below.

Accessibility

- 5.2 All new shopfront designs should be fully compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and Part M of the Building Regulations, which sets out statutory access requirements.
- 5.3 Wherever possible barriers, such as stepped entrances, narrow doorways and unsuitable surfaces should be removed. The provision of alternative means of access should be a last resort. For further guidance on this matter please refer to English Heritage's '*Easy Access to Historic Buildings*' published in 2004.

Overall Design Concepts in Historic Areas

- 5.4 In Historic Areas, it is expected that proposals for new shopfronts, or alterations to existing shopfronts should consider the following design concepts to ensure that the proposal is sympathetic to the character and amenity of the locality.

- Enclosing and framing shop windows and entrances with essential visual and functional elements such as pilasters, fascia and stallriser. Accurate and authentic detailing is essential to avoid unconvincing or clumsy results;



- Using shopfronts that do not dominate the architecture of the main building;
- Avoid linking two buildings with one fascia unless historically already established by continuous architectural pattern or shop use;
- Making sure that shopfronts have individual distinctive identities with different stallriser heights, window designs and fascias that positively contribute to the character and integrity of the building and the complexity and diversity of the street scene;
- Make use of energy-efficient measures with regard to any illumination arising from the shopfront, particularly through the use of LED lighting where appropriate; and
- Make use of recessed doorways, single and double to give more three-dimensional quality.

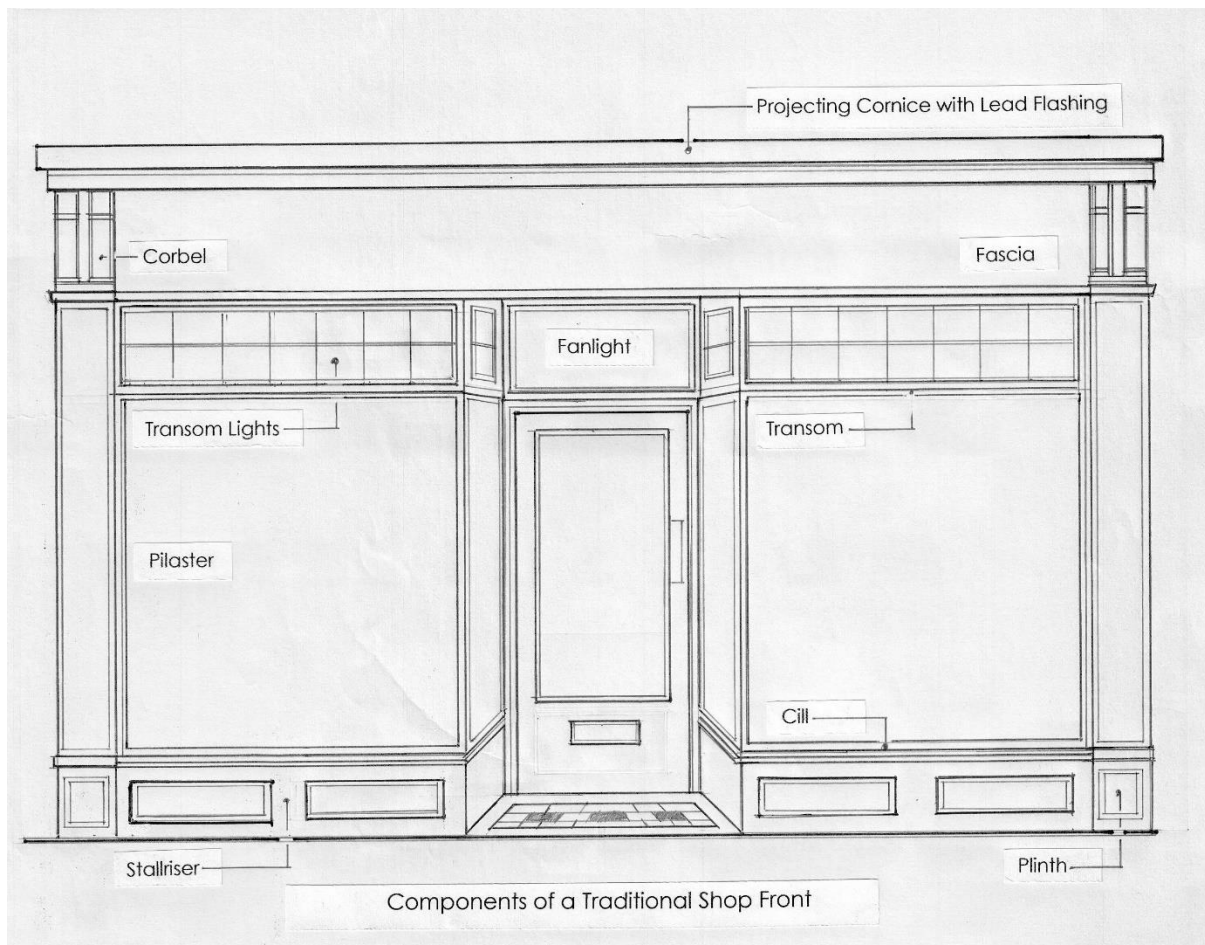


Figure 1: The Main Components of a Traditional Shopfront

Fascias

- 5.5 In relation to the design of fascias, it will be expected that consideration should be given to the proportions of the existing building, particularly in relation to the existing design of the shopfront and the height and depth of the building.



5.6 Proposals for shopfronts should seek to incorporate moulded cornices weathered with a properly detailed lead flashing above the fascia to provide a clear visual break and throw water clear of the shopfront to help prevent rot and to avoid long-term maintenance issues and poor visual appearance.

Doors and Windows

5.7 Incorporating a stallriser protects the shop window and provides a visual break between the window and the street surface. The height of the stallriser will depend upon the style adopted. Designs for shopfronts should seek to include part-glazed door panels that reflect the height of the stallriser. Window design should include the sub-division of large areas of glass to reflect the character of the shopfront and building.

5.8 The use of uPVC windows should reflect the character of both the local area it is situated and the building itself. The use of uPVC windows in historic areas will not be encouraged by the Council and consideration should be given to relevant national and local planning policy on this matter.

5.9 Details on good practice in relation to door and window design are shown in figure X over the page.

Materials and Surface Treatments

5.10 In relation to material and surface treatment, proposals should seek to make use of the matt, non-reflective materials such as painted timber and avoid gloss surfaces like acrylic sheeting, Perspex, aluminium, plastic or stained hardwood.

5.11 Within Conservation Areas, sensitive colours that are sympathetic and appropriate to the local character of the area should be used with the avoidance of strong, strident colours.

5.12 Proposals should ensure that paintwork about the shopfront on windows, gutters, downpipes, eaves and bargeboards are treated as part of an overall colour scheme and are of subdued colour. Making use of rich dark colours to offset the use of bright colours and variety in window displays.



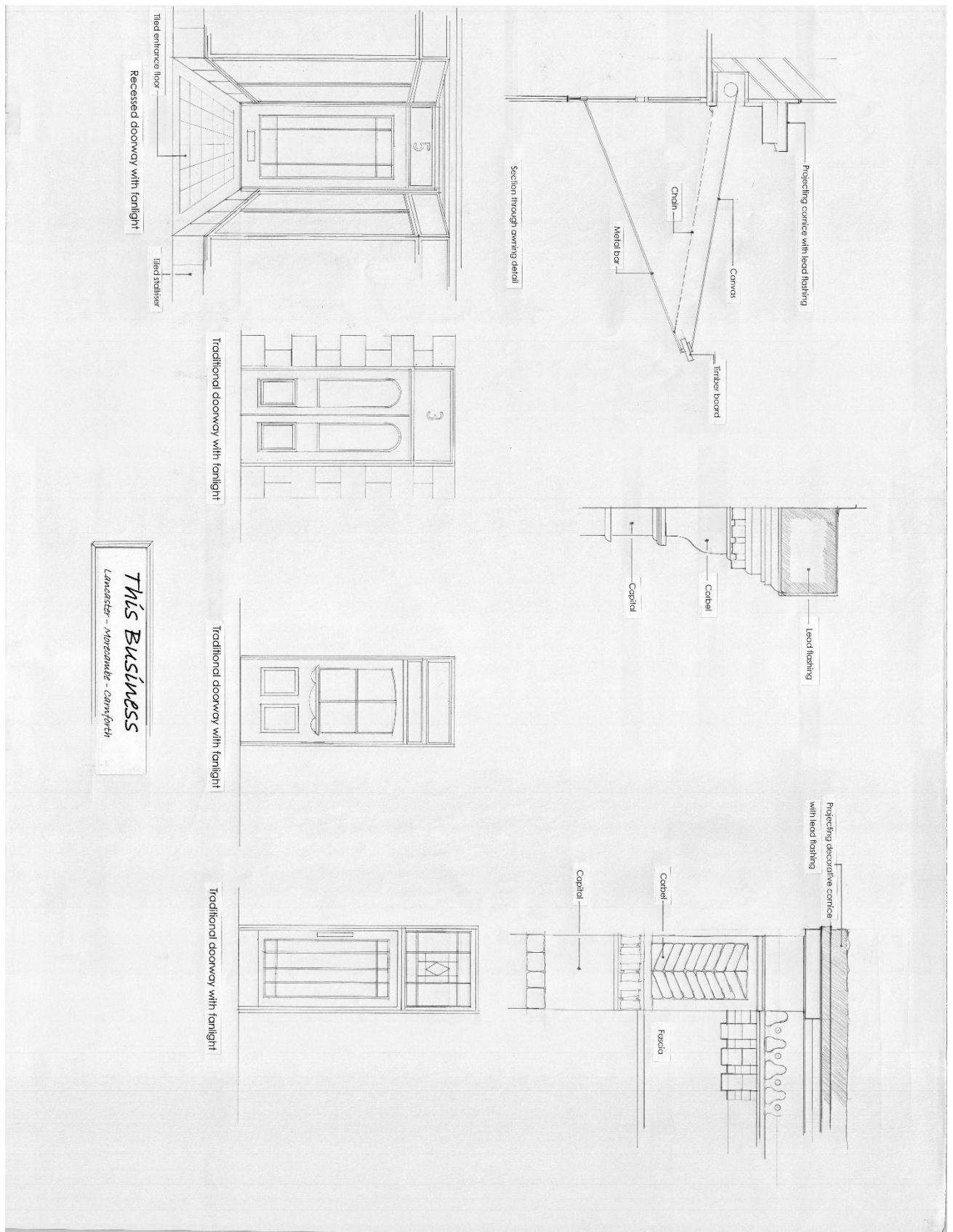


Figure 2: Illustrations to show Window and Door Design Good Practice



Blinds and Canopies

5.13 Proposals should ensure that blinds and canopies are retractable so that the fascia is not permanently obscured, integrating any blind / shutter boxes that are shown to be necessary into the overall design / structure. In appropriate circumstances roller blinds can be incorporated within cornices.

Shutters and Grilles

5.14 Some types of retail, commercial and financial uses may require increased security measures. The addition of external shutters will require planning permission; through the introduction of shutter boxes to the exterior of a historic building is unlikely to be acceptable. Other alternatives may also be considered in the following hierarchy:

- Security glass with alarm or internal cameras;
- A reduction in the size of window glass;
- Internal see-through shutters; and
- External shutters that are removed during working hours, decorative options may be applicable, themed on shop trade.

6. Advertisements

- 6.1 Much of the district's historic areas have dignified subdued ambience. The proliferation of bold, dominant or illuminated advertising material could have a significant detrimental effect on the visual character of a locality, particularly in sensitive places such as Conservation Areas and in sensitive rural locations. It is therefore important that advertisements are sensitively designed.

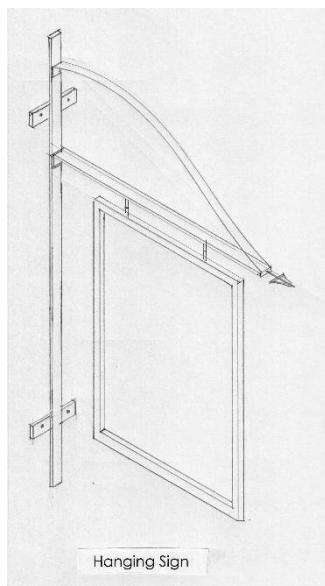
General Principles

- 6.2 It is important that proposals for fascia, hanging and projecting advertisement signs should complement the design of the building and shopfront.
- 6.3 There should be an avoidance of making use of too many advertisements, which detracts from the visual amenity of the locality and creates a 'cluttered' appearance. The cumulative impacts of advertisements should also be assessed in relating to impacts of visual amenity and 'cluttering'.
- 6.4 Coupled with the impacts on visual amenity, consideration should also be given to an advertisements impact on highway safety. Advertisements which are distracting to road users, by the virtue of their scale, design or positioning should be avoided and are likely not to be supported by the City Council.
- 6.5 Illuminated signs should be treated as an integral part of the overall design, which should seek to be discreet, energy efficient and substantially hidden from view.

Fascia Signs

6.6 Proposals for fascia signs should seek to sympathetically integrate the design of the fascia with the shopfront, making use of traditional design fascias and the avoidance of illuminated boxed fascias that project from the face of the building and avoiding adding new fascias on top of existing ones. In terms of lettering, the following design principles should be considered:

- Conveys the essential message of the retailer, in most cases the shop name alone;
- Is either a sign written onto the fascia or applied as individual lettering in a traditional manner directly to the structure of the building;
- Reflects the use and character of the shop and the building;
- Is of a style and size that relates to the area of the fascia or sign and building on which it is used;
- Uses sensitive colours and makes use where appropriate of the shading and blocking of letters;
- Uses sensitive and subtle colours which reflect the local character and appearance of the area – for example in Conservation Areas bold bright colours are unlikely to be accepted; and
 - Minimises impact on the historic fabric of the building.



6.7 In instances where illuminated fascias signs are proposed, these should be sensitively designed in order to be sympathetic to both the building they are attached to and the surrounding area, particularly if situated in a historic area. Illumination of fascias should not be excessive or intrusive and should make use of energy efficient methods of lighting such as via LED.

Projecting Signs

6.8 Proposals for projecting signs should be avoided, unless demonstrated to be appropriate in relation to the character of the area and necessary in relation to the existing business. Particular avoidance should be made of the use of internally illuminated projecting box signs that form a projecting part of a fascia.

6.9 Where a projecting sign is appropriate, proposals should make use of a traditional hanging sign, which is hung from a metal bracket that can add interest to the street without unobtrusive external illumination. Consideration should be given to the use of hanging symbols denoting the trade being carried on in the premises as an interesting and eye-catching alternative to a hanging board.

6.10 Projecting signs should be of a high quality and relate to the size and scale of the existing building façade and do not appear either overly intrusive or inappropriately small. Projecting signs should be carefully positioned to take into account the design and architectural detailing of the existing building – normally below the first floor windows.

6.11 Projecting signs will be restricted to one sign per building and should relate only to the business which occupies the premises.



Stand-Alone Advertising

- 6.12 The Council does not seek to promote the use of A-Boards or any other stand-alone methods of advertisement which gives rise to the sense of clutter and which detracts from the general amenity of the locality. Equally, the use of stand-alone advertise which prevents an obstacle for pedestrians and other road users will not be supported by the Council.
- 6.13 Proposals which are considering the use of A-Boards or any other sort of stand-alone advertising will be encouraged to think of alternative types of advertising methods which do not have as significant impact on local amenity.

Other Types of Advertising

- 6.14 The use of other types of advertising, such as billboards and banners, where they require planning permission should have due consideration of relevant national and local planning policy, in particular Policy DM6 of the Development Management DPD.