

SHOPFRONTS

& Advertisement Design

A guide to shopfronts and advertisement design

Hanging Signs

Canopies & Blinds

PLANNING LA

Signs &
Advertisement

ELEMENT

SHOPFRONT DESIGN

STALLISERS



SALISBURY
District Council



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SHOPFRONTS & Advertisement Design

INTRODUCTION

Salisbury is perhaps the best surviving example of a mediaeval planned city in England. It has a special character and "sense of place" created by the buildings, local building styles and materials and the mediaeval pattern of the streets and chequers. Within this context, shopfronts and advertisements have an important contribution to make to the character of the area and the quality of the environment.

Whilst it is acknowledged that shopfronts and advertisements are designed to attract attention, it is important that care is taken to ensure that the design and materials of individual shops do not clash with, or detract from, existing attractive features of the building or the area. It should be possible to create attractive, individualistic eye-catching shopfronts which enliven the streetscene, without introducing discordant elements.



Fig 1: "Watsons"
Queen Street, Salisbury.

This leaflet therefore sets out Salisbury District Council's policies in respect of shopfronts and advertisements, together with guidelines for good shopfront design. The information given applies equally throughout the district. However we aspire to the highest standard of design and materials for Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

In this leaflet "shop" is defined as including all retail premises, whatever their location, and all commercial premises, including banks, betting offices, restaurants, public houses, estate agents and building societies within shopping areas.

Where consent is given for a new sign, it will normally be for a period of five years, although the sign may continue to be displayed unless the Local Planning Authority actively seeks its removal.

We have included examples of actual shops in this leaflet as we feel these best illustrate the issues discussed. The inclusion of the 'negative' examples is not intended as a criticism of the occupiers as these shopfronts were approved by the authority. They are included rather so that we can benefit from past experience.

General principles and policies

- Where the existing shopfront or shop sign contributes to the character of the building and the surrounding area it should be retained.
- Other shopfronts which, although altered, still retain much of their original character and which contribute to the historic ambience of the area should also be retained. Permission will normally only be granted for their repair or restoration.



Fig 2:
An attractive glazed tiled historic shopfront, somewhat spoilt by the contemporary signage.

- Historic adverts, features or signs - which have a long association with the building, should be retained where possible. For example, where a sign has been painted on to a wall - this should be retained, or where glazed tiles have been used in the design of the shopfront - these should be retained and a scheme developed around such features.
- Where an existing shopfront or shop sign that is unsympathetic to the character of the building is proposed for renewal, the proposed alteration should aim to improve significantly the appearance by integrating it into the building in terms of its design, appearance and scale. Existing features of historical or architectural interest should be retained and integrated into the new overall design.
- Shopfront design should take into account the age and architectural style of a building, and should deal with the building as a whole. For example a shopfront must not attempt to visually separate the ground floor from the rest of the building, or to over-emphasise a fascia.
- New shopfronts will only be permitted where the design is of high quality.
- Replacement shopfronts or shop signs for historic buildings should generally reflect the historic details of the building with a traditional style of shopfront and by utilising traditional materials. They should be designed to respect the period and style of the building and the form and proportions of the superior shopfronts or shop signs in the local area.
- Refurbished and new shopfronts should be contained within the space originally designed for the shop unit.
- Refurbished and new shop signs should be in proportion with the building and should not unduly dominate any elevation. Generally signs should be contained within any space originally designed for them and should not obscure the surrounding façade or traditional elements.



Fig 3: An example of a traditional recessed doorway. Decorative Victorian floor tiles survive in the entrance 'foyer'.



Fig 4: Another example of a recessed doorway. The glass of the shopfront is divided by the Arts and Crafts style leaded lights, which also reflect the style of the building above. There is no fascia so the lettering is applied directly to the building in the fascia position.



District Local Plan Policies

Outside Conservation Areas or for un-listed buildings the following policies are applicable:

G11: A sign or advertisement will be permitted provided that

- i. It is appropriate in size, colour, materials, lettering and height to its surroundings; and
- ii. It will not detract from the visual amenity of the area or have an unacceptable affect on the local landscape

S10: Alterations to existing shopfronts will be permitted provided the proposed alterations respect the historic character and scale of the building or group of buildings.

In relation to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, the following policies apply:

CN13: The retention of shopfronts within Conservation Areas that are attractive, of historic or architectural value, or that contribute to the character of the area will be sought. Permission will only be granted for their repair or restoration.

CN14: In Conservation Areas, new shopfronts will only be permitted where the design is of high quality and appropriate to the character of the building and its surroundings. The linking of pilasters will not be permitted.

CN15: Proposals for internally illuminated signs in Conservation Areas will be permitted where:

- i. There is no detriment to the visual amenity of the area; and
- ii. They preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area

CN16: External grilles, roller shutters or solid metal shutters will not be permitted on listed buildings or in Conservation Areas. External open lattice type grilles will be acceptable where there is no adverse effect on the Listed Building or Conservation Area.

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Fig 5: An attractive shop in mainly residential area. The 'low key' commercial approach suits the setting.

SHOPFRONT DESIGN

Traditional shopfront design relies on a set of principles based on proportion, balance and the right relationship of the parts to the whole. These principles are still valid today but it is the creative interpretation of traditional features that makes for good new design. Each building and site is unique, and a good design should add to the vitality of the street scene without resorting to pastiche.

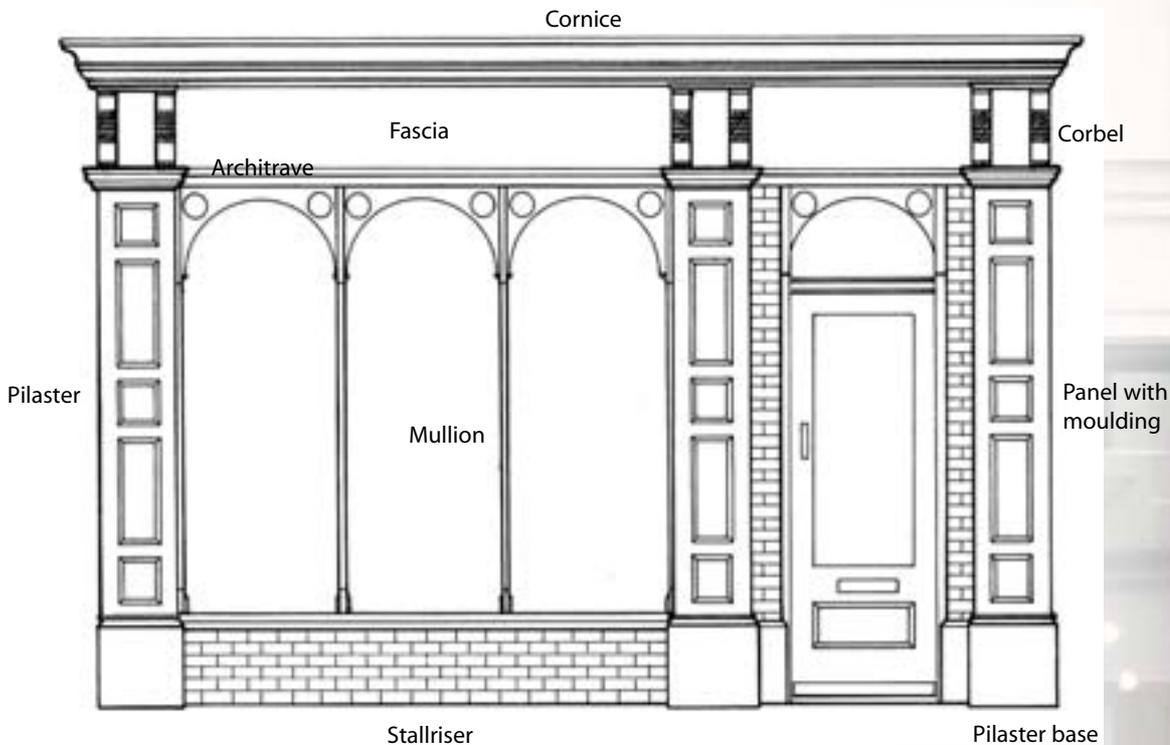


Fig 6: Elements of a traditional shopfront

The traditional shopfront

A traditional shopfront is made up of a number of elements, which form a frame for the shop entrance and shop window. Each element has its own practical and visual function.

- **Architrave:** moulded frame around a door or window
- The **pilasters** separate each shop from its neighbours and define the width of the shopfront.
- Pilaster heads often project to form a bracket or **corbel**. These can either be a decorative feature or a means to allow the fascia to be fixed at an angle looking down to the pavement.
- The **fascia** provides the space within which the name and business of the shop can be displayed.
- The **cornice** defines the top of the shopfront and gives protection from the weather.
- **Mullion:** a vertical post or upright dividing a window or opening into two or more lights.
- The **stallriser** gives protection at ground level and provides a solid base to the shopfront.
- Good design will integrate these elements in a way that presents a pleasing relationship between them, and between the shopfront and the building as a whole.

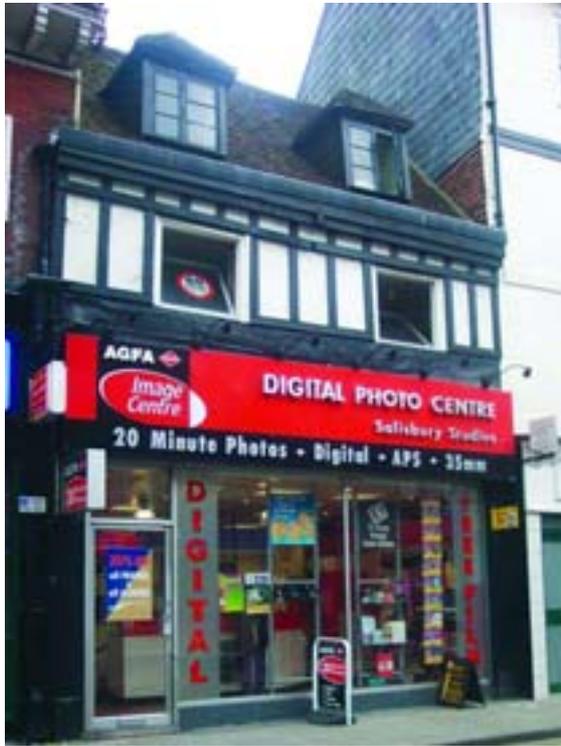


Fig 7: This fascia is too large for the shop and is made of shiny modern materials. The red is garish and too much text is crammed onto the fascia so that it has a confused and 'busy' appearance. The modern aluminium shop front is not in keeping with the building above. A deeper stallriser would also have been preferable.



Fig 8: The fascia is the correct depth for the shopfront and the lettering sits well within the frame. The colour scheme is subtle and unifies the whole front - including the door. The stallriser is an appropriate depth.

ELEMENTS OF THE SHOPFRONT

Fascia and contemporary fascia design

The fascia is probably the most important element of the shopfront both in terms of its function as a shop's display board and in terms of its significance to the overall design. The existence of a former unsuitable fascia (or shopfront) should not be allowed to influence the design of a replacement

- The fascia should not dominate the shopfront or the building above.
- Fascias should be kept well below first floor windowsills, leaving a suitable margin.
- Bottoms of fascias should not extend too far down in proportion to the rest of the shopfront. As a rule of thumb, fascias should be no greater than one quarter the depth of the shopfront below the fascia.
- The fascia must be part of the shop front, separated from the adjacent fascia by pilasters and should not extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings.
- Where an excessively deep fascia has been introduced in the past, the overall height of the fascia should be reduced to expose the wall surface above.
- The fascia on a historic building should be painted timber. Glossy plastic, Perspex, or large areas of highly polished metal finishes are unlikely to be acceptable.

Fig 9:

A traditional shopfront utilising a traditional and subtle colour palette. The large glass timber-framed window is divided by a mullion. Lettering has been applied directly to the upper wall of the building to advertise a first floor business in such a way to reflect the symmetry of the front elevation



Stallrisers

Stallrisers are an integral part off the shopfront and need to be part of the overall design. They vary in height according to the style adopted, but should be at least 500mm high. They give protection to shop windows and should therefore be constructed of substantial and hardwearing materials. Panelled painted timber, brick, stone, rendering or other non-reflective materials are preferred. Where Victorian glazed tiles survive, these should be retained.

Windows

Large expanses of glass present a blank aspect and should normally be avoided. Shop windows should be divided into vertically proportioned sections with glazing bars or mullions so that together with the entrance, they relate to the upper part of a building.



Fig 10:

Two potentially large windows are broken up by glazing bars. The glazing bars also echo the glazing pattern of the upper floors. Note the painted lettering applied directly to the building at second storey level.



Fig 11: A shopfront with a wide expanse of flat glass. The fascia is made of modern materials and is overly large, impinging on the first floor. The shopfront does not reflect the architecture and the rhythm of the upper floors and the fascia is overbearing.

Doors

Doors to shops, or premises above a shop, should be designed as an integral part of the facade. Where recessed doorways exist they should be retained and reinstated on older shopfronts where appropriate.



Fig 12: Although in this case the letters are shiny metal, due to the brevity of the word and the simplicity of the style - a subtle, attractive fascia is achieved.

Colour

The colour palette should reflect the context of the area, i.e. a modern colour palette will be acceptable in a modern shopping precinct although garish 'day-glow' colours are unlikely ever to be acceptable. Where shopfronts and signs are within a historic street, a 'traditional' colour palette and finish should be used. Rich, dark colours with a matt finish often look very good, leaving window displays and lettering to provide accents.

Whatever the context, colour schemes adopted should be subtle and blend harmoniously with the environment.

Corporate organisations should not assume that their corporate colour scheme will be acceptable and variations may be required.

Listed building consent may be required for the repainting of shopfronts on a listed building, where a colour change would affect its character (please check with the Conservation Officer).

Materials

Materials used in shopfront construction should be of good quality, durable and in keeping with a building's existing character. In general, the number and type of materials and colours used should be kept to a minimum.

Materials traditionally used in Salisbury are wood, glass, brick, stone, and brass. Good quality modern materials for lettering will sometimes be permitted where appropriate, but fascias made of acrylic sheeting, Perspex, aluminium or plastic will not generally be permitted.

Timber is the most versatile of materials and was the standard shopfront material of previous centuries. Painted timber is preferred to stained hardwood and tropical hardwoods are discouraged as their use is environmentally questionable.

Sustainability, especially the prudent use of natural resources, should be addressed in all shopfront designs and refurbishments. Materials should be carefully chosen with energy efficiency, durability, security and maintenance requirements in mind. Natural materials like timber products are usually a more sustainable option than uPVC and aluminium, which need a lot of energy to be produced and harm the environment when disposed of. Sustainably forested timber products can be sourced through the Forest Stewardship Council (www.fsc-uk.org). When undertaking refurbishment works opportunities to reuse and recycle materials should be taken to reduce construction costs.

Lettering

Lettering upon the fascia should preferably be traditionally sign-written. In some circumstances applied lettering will be considered, for example, guided lettering with a half-round section is particularly suitable for pubs and hotels. Flat applied lettering on minimal pins will sometimes be acceptable.

Lettering should normally be easily contained within the fascia - a ratio of 60% fascia height for lettering, with 20% spacing above and below is a guide. Generally, the length of wording should not be greater than 75% of the fascia length.

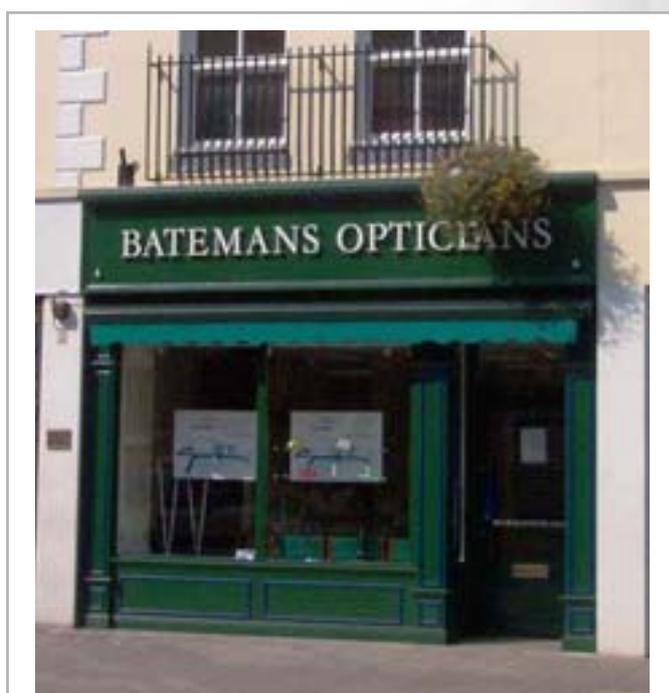


Fig 13: Batemans - an example of lettering that sits comfortably within the fascia.

Fig 14:

The lettering for Superbuys is very large and uncomfortably fills the fascia. The fascia is plastic and lacks mouldings. The colours are modern and do not relate sympathetically to the shop next door or the building above.



Where no fascia exists, lettering can be applied either directly to the wall between the ground and first floor level, or on the ground floor windows. Lettering applied directly to the wall should be of a design and material that is sympathetic to the building.

**Fig 15:**

The modern fret-cut metal lettering, in an informal style, suits the industrial character of this building. The absence of the fascia allows for a more imaginative and flexible approach.

SIGNS AND ADVERTISING

Advertisements situated within a building (i.e. in or on the shop window) may also require consent (advertisement and listed building consent where appropriate).

Corporate image

National or regional retailers will be asked to modify their standard designs if they are considered to be out of character in a particular location.

Illumination

The illumination of shopfronts and signage within well-lit town centres is generally considered unnecessary. In certain circumstances, for example where the business is open in the evening, modest levels of discreet lighting (the purpose of which is to light the lettering and not bathe the whole façade and pavement in a pool of light) may be permitted.

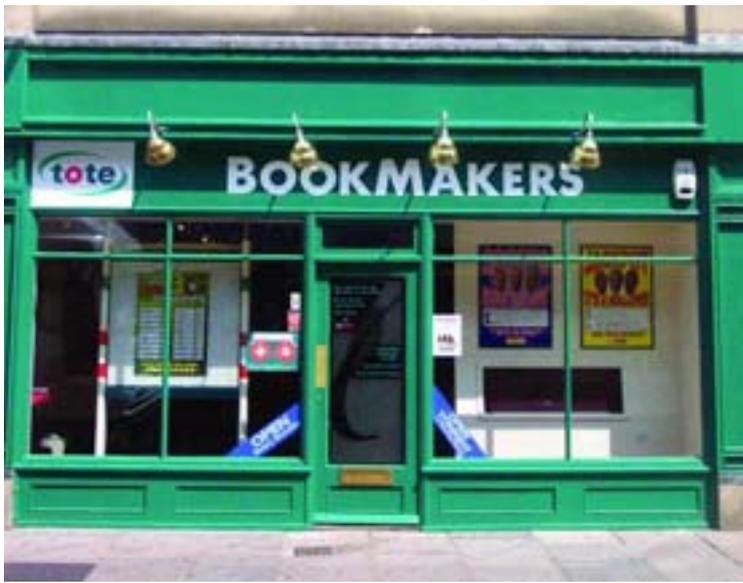


Fig 16: A traditional shopfront with the windowpane divided by glazing bars. The effect is spoiled by the addition of large swan neck lights.



Fig 17: Spotlights, painted the colour of the wall, highlight the signage without being obtrusive.

External lights to illuminate fascias should be carefully sited to minimise their visual impact and should be designed to provide highlighting to the lettering only. Small spotlights or thin trough lights illuminating the lettering may be considered acceptable; rows of swan neck lights rarely will.

Light fittings should be discreetly located, painted the same colour as the fascia and concealed under cornices or architectural profiling.

On listed buildings, the design of the light source and the number of light fittings will be considered for their affect on the character of the building.

Internally illuminated fascias **are not** acceptable.



Fig 18: Detail of a discreet spotlight.

Hanging signs

Normally only one modest hanging sign per shop is appropriate and generally the style and size of the hanging sign should complement the fascia and be located at fascia level. Guidance already given on lettering, colour and materials also applies to hanging signs.

If the fascia is illuminated, the illumination of the hanging sign is unlikely to be acceptable. Internally illuminated hanging signs will not be acceptable

The formal consent of the County Council is required under the Highways Act for anyone wishing to erect a sign or similar structure which overhangs a highway or footpath.

ADDITIONAL SHOPFRONT FEATURES

Cash dispensers

Cash dispensers must be treated as an integral part of shopfront design. They must be located without damaging historic fabric. Generally, they are best placed within a recess or doorway and should be at a height convenient for the disabled, no higher than 1 metre above floor level. They should be of a simple design with a minimal amount of display material.

Access

New shopfronts should allow convenient access for all, including those with disabilities. All new work must comply with relevant standards; however, where an historic shopfront is involved, great care must be taken to avoid erosion of the appearance and character of the listed building.

Burglar and fire alarms

Burglar and fire alarms are necessary but can often be unsightly and, if possible, should not be placed on front elevations. On listed buildings the smallest available size of alarm boxes should be used, painted an appropriate colour to match the background. On new shopfronts, alarms should be considered as part of the overall shopfront design.

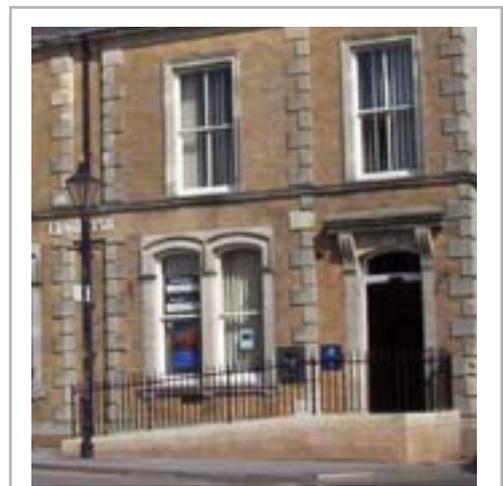


Fig 20: Disabled access

"A" boards

Consent to display "A" boards is needed from the county council. In general, "A" boards are not encouraged as they inhibit pedestrian movement.

Canopies and blinds

Boxes and housing for any shutters, of whatever design, should be designed to minimise their impact on the shopfront. They should avoid obscuring architectural features and be designed as part of the overall scheme.

Blinds are acceptable so long as they are fully retractable on a daily basis and do not permanently obscure the fascia. The blind box into which the blinds retract should be integrated within an overall design so that architectural features are not obscured. Blinds should be no wider than the fascia.



Fig 19: A modern Dutch canopy in plastic and garish colours. The fascia sits uncomfortably close to the first floor windows with a bank of visible swan-neck lights. A retractable blind with the business name written on the blind would have been preferable.



Fig 20: A traditional retractable blind that reflects the character of the shop and does not detract from the upper stories of the building. Because the fascia is covered when it is open, the business name is printed on the blind.

Fixed blinds, such as curved Dutch type of canopy, are out of character in historic streets and are not acceptable. The use of plastics, wet-look or stretch fabrics for blinds or canopies is strongly discouraged. Canopies and blinds should not be fitted above ground floor level.

Upper floors

Where upper floors of buildings are used for business, any lettering should be applied directly to the window and be not more than 100mm high. Windows should be screened if goods are stacked on upper floors. Any lettering on the first floor should ideally relate only to the business carried out on that floor.

Security shutters and grilles

Shop owners naturally wish to protect their property and stock. In Conservation Areas, the most appropriate security methods are those which do not require external shutters or grilles. The Local Planning Authority's policy on security grilles is that solid metal shutters or shutter boxes will not normally be permitted on shop and commercial premises within Conservation Areas and on listed buildings, but in exceptional circumstances roller grilles may be accepted with spindle boxes recessed behind the fascia board to a design approved by the Council.

There are three main alternatives to external shutters or grilles - toughened glass, additional glazing bars or internal grilles.

- Toughened glass incorporates a plastic interlayer and can remain intact even when broken.
- Additional glazing bars reduce glazing size, thus strengthening glass area and reducing opportunities for theft.
- Internal open-mesh window grilles, fixed inside shop windows behind glass, allow views into the shop even after hours and give a less fortified appearance than external grilles.

Planning permission is required for the installation of any permanent security shutter on the external face of an existing shopfront. Listed Building Consent will also be needed if the building is listed (both for external and internal shuttering).

Pubs

The character of historic and attractive public houses can be detrimentally affected by a plethora of lights and signs. Signs should be kept to a minimum and should reflect the character of the building. Breweries should avoid the repetition of the brewery name and logo - perhaps limiting this to a hanging sign or a small logo on the wall near an entrance.

It is accepted that some lighting will be required, however, the lighting should be kept to a minimum. Discreet spotlights will be preferred. Swan-neck lights or trough lights are rarely acceptable.



Fig 22:
An attractive pub with discreet signage. The curved stallriser and brown glazed bricks are particularly attractive.

Garages (petrol filling stations and car showrooms etc)

Garages can potentially require a large amount of signage which often includes pole or totem signs, and are usually modern in design. Many garages are located on principal roads and support separate businesses. As such the potential for an excessive number of incompatible signs on a garage forecourt is great. In order to protect and enhance the appearance of an area, the Council requires new signage to be approached in a co-ordinated way. Lighting should be kept to a minimum, illumination kept to a discreet level and pole signs kept to a minimum height (lower than the main building)



Fig 23:

A example of a well-designed modern car showroom. This site is outside the conservation area and on a road with comparable businesses. The building, signage lights and totem pole are all contemporary, reflecting the nature of the business.

SHOPFRONTS AND PLANNING LAW

In general, alterations to shopfronts will normally require planning permission, and alterations affecting the character of listed buildings will probably need listed building consent. Adverts on listed buildings will almost always require listed building consent.

Planning permission

Planning permission is required for any material change in the external appearance of a shop. This could include altering the glazing, changing facing materials, installing blinds and shutters or enlarging a fascia.

Listed building consent

Any alteration affecting a listed building will require listed building consent. This can include such detail as repainting a shopfront in a different colour, installing a security alarm, altering the shop interior, or installing shutters, blinds and advertisements.

Conservation area consent

Conservation area consent is required for the substantial demolition of any building in a conservation area. This could include the removal of a shopfront.

Advertisement consent

Advertisement consent is required for the display of most signs, although there are exceptions. The Regulations in respect of advertisements are complex and not easily summarised. All applicants are strongly advised to contact the Development Control section of the Local Planning Authority to establish whether advertisement consent is required.

An area of Special Control for Advertisements covers part of the District, and within this area particular care is taken over the control of design and type of advertisements.

Building Control

The Local Authority Building Control section should also be consulted, at which time consideration of the effect of the proposals on means of escape, glazing and the disabled will take place. Alterations to buildings that reduce the existing means of escape provisions, or those for the disabled, are not permitted.

Information required by the Local Planning Authority

To avoid unnecessary delay, applications for shopfronts and adverts should include the following:

1. A site plan (to scale 1:1250 minimum) showing the building in relation to the street and other shops.
2. A block plan to at least 1:500 scale to identify the building within the site.
3. Fully detailed plans to a suitable scale (1:100 minimum) showing all dimensions of existing and proposed development. Details of particular features (e.g. blind boxes, canopies) may also be necessary. Elevations containing shopfronts or signage must illustrate the full height (i.e. to ridge line) of the building and adjoining buildings.
4. Materials, finishes and colours should be specified and an accurate colour swatch or sample provided. Where a proposal involves retention of existing features, plans should show how the new shopfront incorporates these features.
5. Applications should be accompanied by photographs of the whole of the principal façade. These photographs need not be professionally taken but should clearly show architectural details and features. Larger scale details of the fascia, projecting signs, lighting, and glazing bars - should be provided, where necessary.

Further Information

For local plan policies: [http:](http://www.salisbury.gov.uk/localplan/default.asp)

www.salisbury.gov.uk/localplan/default.asp

Outdoor Advertisements and Signs:

A Guide for Advertisers - DETR (1995)

Shopfronts and Advertisements in Historic Towns (1991):

English Historic Towns Forum

For sustainable timber:

Forest Stewardship Council (www.fsc-uk.org).



"In the centre of town, there stood a small building occupied by Lunn Poly travel agency. Upstairs the structure was half-timbered and quietly glorious, downstairs, between oversized sheets of plate glass covered with handwritten notices of cheap flights to Tenerife and Malaga, the façade had been tiled, tiled with a mosaic of little multi-toned squares that looked as if they had been salvaged from a King's Cross toilet".

Bill Bryson - talking about Salisbury in "Notes From A Small Island"

** from research it appears that this shopfront was introduced in the mid 1940s before Planning Regulations were introduced.*



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