



London Borough of Enfield

SHOPFRONTS AND ASSOCIATED ADVERTISEMENTS

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SHOPFRONTS AND ASSOCIATED ADVERTISEMENTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The appearance of individual shop fronts and their associated advertisements can have a considerable impact on the general environmental quality of shopping centres. In recent years the appearance of many shopping streets has been spoilt by alterations to shop fronts which have not respected the original design and which have been carried out using unsuitable modern materials.
- 1.2 Enfield contains a wide variety of shop premises, some contained within large centres such as Enfield Town, Edmonton Green, Upper Edmonton, Palmers Green and Southgate Circus, Others in smaller district and local centres. Many of these shops were built during the main period of suburban development in the Borough between 1880 and 1939 and most form part of a purpose-built shopping parade.
- 1.3 When first built these shopping parades exhibited a clear unity in their design and architectural detailing. Over the past thirty years, however, this unity has often been lost. The use of modern materials and the introduction of “house styles” by multiple retailers, have sometimes led to inappropriate changes being made to the style and proportions of fascias and windows and to the loss of architectural details.
- 1.4 Planning applications for new shop fronts are assessed in the light of Policies (II) C15-C16, C26-C34, and S19 (pages 57, 62-63 and 104-5) of the UDP. The purpose of this supplementary planning guidance is to set out those matters to which the Council will have regard when considering proposals for the alteration or replacement of shop fronts. These considerations apply generally throughout the Borough’s shopping centres but are of particular relevance in Conservation Areas.

2. Existing Features

- 2.1 It can be seen from Figure 1 below that, although the style and detail of shop fronts has changed over the years, the component parts have remained much the same. The features of particular concern in the traditional shop front are:
- (a) The “changeable area” – that part of the shop front which comes below the bottom of the fascia and within the flanking pilasters. Any changes to the appearance of the shop front should be confined to this area.
 - (b) The “signable area” – in the case of the traditional shop front, this consists of the fascia. Proposals for advertisement displays should normally be confined to this area.

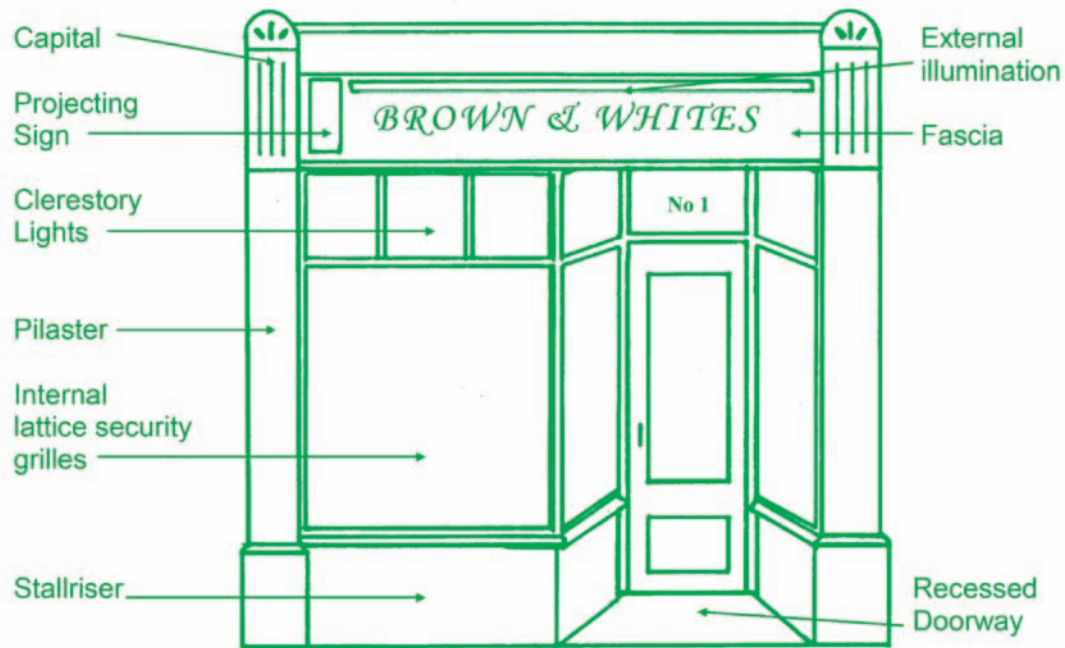


Fig. 1 Traditional shopfront elements

3. Shop fronts in the Street

- 3.1 Shopping streets and precincts are usually divided up along their length by shop units occupying short individual frontages, clearly defined and differentiated by vertical architectural features, which typically continue up through the upper floors of the building.
- 3.2 Larger businesses sometimes occupy adjacent buildings, which may be of a similar age and character or may have been built at different periods. In either case it is seldom appropriate to attempt to unite separate shop units under one entablature. Separate vertical sub-divisions should be maintained. Where they have been removed in the past, they should be reinstated as part and parcel of proposals for new shop fronts.
- 3.3 Similarly, in cases where adjoining buildings have different floor heights, ceiling heights or building lines, it is almost never appropriate to impose uniform alignments of fascias, either in elevation or in plan.
- 3.4 The proportions of shop fronts (and the elements within them) should always pay proper regard to the traditional proportions of adjoining buildings as well as to those of the building in which they are installed.



391-397 Fore Street, Edmonton

4. Shop fronts as part of a building

- 4.1 In the case of a purpose built shop, the shop front should be fitted within the changeable area and should not encroach on the façade of the building itself. Nor should existing architectural features surrounding the changeable area be interfered with since they form an integral part of the whole building.
- 4.2 In cases where past encroachment has occurred, proposals for new shop fronts will be expected to provide a new framework of appropriate architectural style and detail for the period and style of the building of which it forms part. Where only elements of this framework are missing, their reinstatement will usually be required. The correct style and manner of such a reinstatement may usually be established by studying the original design features on premises nearby. Similarly, new proposals should provide for the reinstatement of any features, which have in the past been removed.
- 4.3 The recent tendency to install disproportionately deep fascias will be resisted, notwithstanding the existence of any deep fascias on adjoining premises. Every effort will be made to secure the reinstatement of fascias according to the traditional proportions of the buildings to which they are fitted. Fascias with an overall depth of more than 400 mm will rarely be appropriate.
- 4.4 The provision of a door recess is often a feature of traditional shop fronts. Such recesses are not only of practical benefit but also lend interest to a frontage. Accordingly the retention or incorporation of a lobby within design proposals will be favoured.
- 4.5 New shop fronts should also have regard to the architectural ordering of the upper floors of buildings in which they are situated, particularly in the case of premises occupying corner sites.



47 – 49 Church Street, Enfield



Palace Gardens, Enfield

5. Style

- 5.1 Proposals for new shop fronts should be sensitive to the age and character of the building in which they are situated. Existing original eighteenth and nineteenth century shop fronts as well as more modern frontages, including those of Art Nouveau and Art Deco design, may be of considerable architectural interest. They should be retained wherever possible. In cases where the existing shop front itself is of poor quality or of little interest and not worthy of retention, it may still be appropriate to retain or re-use elements of interest such as mosaic tiled lobbies, curved glass entrances, decorative glasswork, glazed tilework and brickwork, and good architectural ironmongery.



32-34 The Green, Winchmore Hill

- 5.2 It is not usually appropriate to impose unsophisticated modern designs and materials within the framework of older shop premises. On the other hand, recreations of traditional designs also need to be handled carefully. Crude pastiches of earlier styles, such as the neo-Georgian shop front should be avoided.



236 Fore Street, Edmonton

- 5.3 House styles adopted by multiple retailers will rarely be appropriate in every circumstance, and must be adapted to the local context and to the requirements of particular buildings and their neighbours.



4 The Town, Enfield



Palace Gardens, Enfield

6. Materials and Colour

- 6.1 Traditional materials and finishes, such as timber facings, polished stone, close-jointed quarry tiles and terrazzo or mosaic floors are usually preferable in terms of durability and appearance to their various modern equivalents.
- 6.2 Wood in particular is the most versatile material for the construction of shop fronts, providing it is appropriately painted, varnished or grained. It may be worked to create complex detail whilst moulded sections may be used to create the interest given by both horizontal and vertical shadow lines. It is also sufficiently flexible to meet most needs.



32 Church Street, Enfield



2 Church Street, Edmonton

- 6.3 Anodised aluminium is now used extensively for shop fitting. Its somewhat mechanical lines may be relieved by the use of more complex extrusions whilst the plain anodised material can be improved in its appearance by the use of colour finishes.
- 6.4 Colour is a matter of taste and fashion more than any other aspect of design. However, the colour schemes of shop fronts and associated advertisements should always avoid stark tonal contrasts and should harmonise with both neighbouring premises and the building in which they are installed. The co-ordination of the colour used on the joinery of upper floors with that of the shop front is often particularly effective.
- 6.5 Tiled, stone or glazed brick finishes to pilasters should never be painted.
- 6.6 The etching of glass can be a most satisfactory means of displaying the name of a business on a shop window. It can also be used, when necessary, to partially obscure the view through the window.

7. Security

- 7.1 Concern about the security of shop premises has grown in recent years. Whilst the Council appreciates this concern, it also wishes to maintain the attractiveness of shopping streets outside normal trading hours. Accordingly, roller shutters, which obscure shop windows, will almost never be considered acceptable. Roller lattice grilles installed behind the window glass will be preferred to those installed externally. The roller boxes for these grilles should, wherever possible, be installed within the fascia. In no circumstances will they be permitted to project externally.
- 7.2 Where it is unavoidably necessary for a roller grille box to be set below fascia level, it must be set so that its front face is well behind that of the fascia, so as to minimise the fascia's apparent overall depth.
- 7.3 Any guide rails for the sides of external grilles must be installed in such a way that they do not interfere with or destroy the detail or finishes of flanking pilasters (or window mullions if protecting only a door recess). They must also be set back behind the front face of the pilasters or window mullions.

8. Window displays

- 8.1 The provision of window displays is essential if the vitality of shopping frontages is to be maintained. Shop front proposals should always, therefore, provide for the installation of a properly fitted and lighted window bed. The Council will usually impose planning conditions on any approvals for shop fronts, requiring that shop windows be maintained unobscured, restricting the amount of advertising material that may be displayed on the windows, and requiring at a window display be maintained.

9. Access to Upper Floors

- 9.1 In cases where an existing street door provides access to accommodation above shops, access to these upper floors should always be maintained. The maintenance of separate access will be required even where the premises are used wholly or in part by the ground floor shopkeeper so that the satisfactory subdivision of the property at some future date is not precluded. In cases where separate access to upper floors does not exist, the Council will attempt to secure its provision through negotiation when examining proposals for new shop fronts.
- 9.2 Street doors should always be regarded as an integral part of the overall design of a shop front and should accord with it in proportion, style and materials.

10. Access for People with Disabilities

- 10.1 Owners and applicants have a statutory duty to provide reasonable access facilities for people with disabilities. The Council will bear this requirement in mind when examining proposals for works to shop fronts. In cases where there is a significant difference in level between the pavement fronting a property and the internal floor of a shop, it will usually be appropriate to provide a ramped access within a lobby, the street door being set well back from the street frontage.

11. Blinds

- 11.1 Blinds should be fitted only to those shops whose window display contains perishable goods or goods likely to fade. Where the installation of blinds is required for functional reasons, they should be of a fully retractable type and covered with material of a colour and texture appropriate to the overall appearance of the premises to which they are fitted. Their lowest edge when extended should be at least 2400 mm above pavement level.



391 Fore Street, Edmonton

- 11.2 Fixed “Dutch” blinds, particularly of the “wet-look” type, are almost always inappropriate on both the ground and upper floors of traditional shop premises, since they form unduly prominent features on the buildings to which they are fitted, upsetting the rhythm of shopping frontages and obscuring architectural detail.

12. Other matters

- 12.1 The absence of street numbering on shop fronts is often a matter of confusion to the general public, particularly to strangers visiting a town centre. Accordingly, the street number should be displayed clearly on the fascia, fanlight or door of each shop.

- 12.2 Public clocks on shop premises were until recently relatively common in shopping streets. The Council considers their retention and provision to be desirable and will seek to ensure that those already in existence are retained and maintained, and that new clocks are provided where needed. In general, the addition of a clock will be the only alteration to the upper part of shop premises likely to receive favourable consideration. Clocks may, subject to satisfactory design detail, incorporate the name of the premises to which they are fitted.
- 12.3 Burglar alarms should always be fitted in the least obtrusive position possible (preferably immediately above the fascia) and any associated wiring should be run within the building or otherwise concealed.

13. Advertisement Displays

- 13.1 It will almost always be inappropriate to install any permanent advertising material outside the "signable area", save for discreet displays incorporated in well-designed public clocks. Advertisement signs display within this area must be designed in such a way that they do not obscure flanking architectural detail or fascias on other shops. The tendency of recent years to bring fascias forward by the installation of various forms of box signs will be resisted. Proposals should provide for the restoration of fascia alignment to accord with the originally intended or traditional fascia line, set well within the surround framework. Fascias, like shop fronts, should be divided so as to accord with the architectural pattern and traditional divisions of the buildings on which they are fixed.



353 Fore Street, Edmonton

- 13.2 Neon tube lighting should be used with considerable discretion and fixed with care. The Council will apply restrictions on the luminosity of signs appropriate to the vicinity in which they are installed.
- 13.3 Internally illuminated projecting box-signs are not appropriate within Conservation Areas and will only rarely be considered suitable elsewhere, since they are usually unduly obtrusive in the street scene, appearing clumsy during the day and distracting at night. Bracketed signboards, externally illuminated as appropriate, will often be an acceptable alternative. However, as with any sign, particular care should be taken to ensure that architectural features are not damaged when any sign is installed.
- 13.4 The provision of hanging signs, brass plates, or black or gold letters applied individually to fanlights or upper floor windows, will usually be sufficient to identify separate business users on the upper floors of shops.
- 13.5 The Council will usually attach conditions to planning permissions for shop fronts restricting shop window advertisements to not more than 10% of the window area, since a proliferation of such signs may be most unsightly

CHECKLIST

Shopfronts

- Have vertical divisions between units been retained? (see para 3.1 - 3.2)
- Does the fascia reflect buildings of different floor heights and not unify buildings of different floor heights? (para 3.3).
- Is the shopfront in proportion with the building? (see para 3.4)
- Is the shopfront contained within the architectural framework and not encroaching on the building face? (para 4.1)
- Do the proposals reinstate missing architectural elements? (see para 4.2)
- Is the fascia depth limited to the traditional fascia line? (see para 4.3)
- Has a door recess / lobby been considered? (see para 4.4)
- Has any historically significant shopfronts or elements thereof been retained? (see para 5.1)
- Has the standard house style been adapted to the local context? (see para 5.3)
- Have traditional or quality materials and harmonious colours been used? (see para 6.1-6.5)
- Is the security shutter mechanism installed within the fascia rather than externally projecting and are they of the see through type? (see para 7.1-7.3)
- Has a window display been included? (see para 8.1)
- Is a separate access to the upper floor provided? Is the front door design in keeping with the shop frontage? (see para 9.1-9.2)
- Does the access provide for people with disabilities? (see para 10.1)
- Are any blinds retractable and of appropriate material, colour and height? (see para 11.1-11.2)
- Does the shop front show the street number? (see para 12.1)

Advertisements

- Is the fascia depth limited to the traditional fascia line? (see para 13.1)
- Is the fascia flush and not brought forward to obscure flanking architectural detail? (see para 13.1)
- Has the fascia been divided vertically to frame each shop unit? (see para 13.1)
- Are projecting signs not of the box type and not internally illuminated?
- Are they fixed so as not to damage architectural features? (see para 13.3)
- Is the luminosity appropriate to the site? (see para 13.2)