

BOSTON SPA - SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE



'Boston Spa is a great place to live and to work. This is in part because of the great range of shops, bars and restaurants we have on our doorstep and the vibrancy of the village centre.'

'We've produced this guide because we want to help preserve the look and feel of the village and enable people to enhance their shop frontages in a way that benefits us all'.

The Parish Council is here to offer support, help and advice so please get in touch to discuss your proposals.

Jonny Lyne (Parish Councillor)
Chair of The People Friendly Village Centre Working Group

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INTRODUCTION

The design and appearance of a shop front and its signage has a big impact on both the building and the street on which it is located. A well designed shop front should respect both the building itself and the character of its street. Good design is positive for the overall appearance of the street scene, ensuring a high quality retail environment which is more attractive to shoppers, visitors and opportunities for inward investment. This guide aims to strike a balance between encouraging best practice in shop front design without stifling creativity and the expression of personal identity where it's appropriate.

This document provides guidance on the principles that should be followed in the design of new shop fronts. It is worth noting that existing shop fronts within the village should not always be taken as a design precedent.

This document is intended to help those:

- Wishing to erect signs, canopies or security features on a shop
- Wishing to alter or install a new shop front
- Wishing to display goods in front of their shop
- Seeking to achieve a good standard of design which will benefit traders, shoppers and the quality of the environment
- Wanting to establish whether a permission or consent is required for the work planned on a shop front.

These guidelines apply to all shops in Use Class A (inclusive of restaurants, cafes, bars and takeaways) in the village.

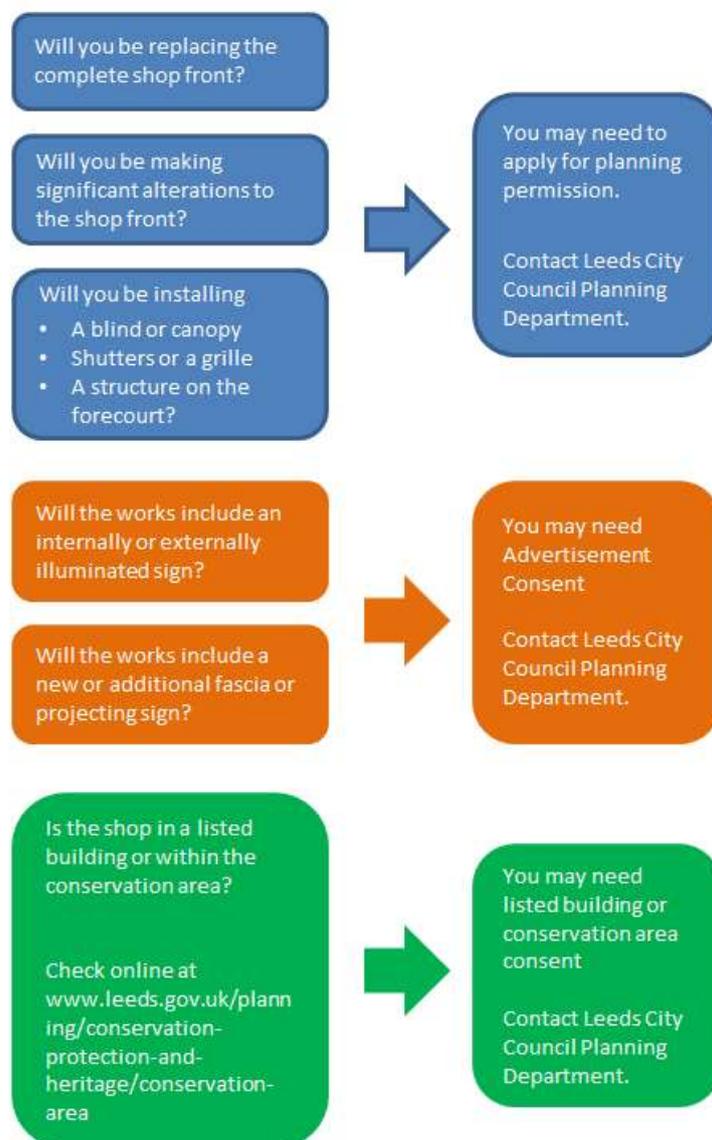
This document sets out **eight design objectives** which establish good practice for designing shop fronts in the village both for traditional and modern units. All designs should adhere to Building Regulations to ensure that they are in line with space, design and accessibility standards; and should seek the required permissions to be authorised.

Using this document and engaging in early discussion with the Parish Council will help to ensure the most successful shop front outcomes, with the required permissions and consents.

WHAT PERMISSIONS AND CONSENTS YOU NEED

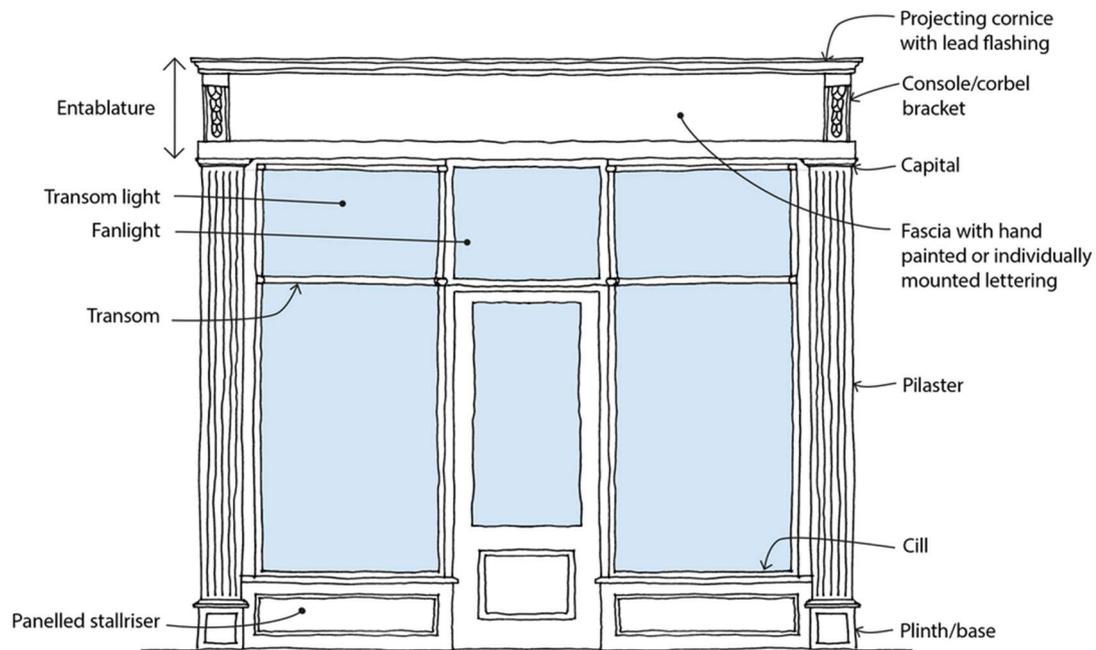
The scale and nature of the alterations or additions to a shop front will determine whether approval must be sought from the council. This could be for a planning permission; a listed building, conservation or advertising consent.

It is important to remember that an application for these approvals may not be successful. Where the proposed alteration or addition contravenes policy, guidance or regulations, the Council may refuse the application and the work to the shop front will not be allowed. Where work to a shop front is found to be in breach of, or without the required permissions and consents, enforcement action will be taken by the Council where considered expedient.



WHAT IS A SHOP FRONT

Below is what would be considered a typical shop front



Below is an example of good shop front design in a Conservation Area



DESIGN OBJECTIVES

1. Shop front refurbishments: retention of original features

When refurbishing an existing shop front, original features should be retained such as pilasters, corbels and stall risers. New shop fronts and signage should not obscure, damage or destroy such features and the original proportions of the shop front should be maintained. All shops in Boston Spa are in a Conservation Area and so specialist advice should be sought before starting works.

Removal of period features can lead to fines and a requirement to reinstate the works which can be very costly. In cases where pilasters or corbels do not exist, strong divisions between each shop should be maintained.

2. Creating well-proportioned frontages

When designing a completely new shop front as part of a new building, a well-proportioned shop front is essential to ensure good design is achieved.

Elements such as doors, fascias and windows should all be in proportion with both the building itself and the general street scene.

The removal of the shop front to create a completely open-fronted shop or the installation of large plate glass windows should be avoided.

Fascias should not be over large in relation to the building facade and the shop front, otherwise it may become disproportionate and out of scale.

Use glazing bars to sub-divide large windows to give a sense of scale and proportion. Stall risers should be incorporated at the base of the window and should be between 0.4m and 0.7 high.

3. Using appropriate materials

The type of material used in a shop front is an important element of the overall design and should take into account the character of the building.

Designs should not employ a large number of different materials that could clash with neighbouring units or the general street scene.

Traditional materials are preferred, especially in the Conservation Area. Timber windows are required on elevations fronting the High Street.

Synthetic materials such as anodised aluminium, plastic or fibreglass are rarely appropriate.

4. Ensuring accessible design

Shops should be fully accessible to all, including those with disabilities (both physical and non-physical) and those with prams or push-chairs. Good accessibility goes way beyond design of the front door.

The pavement and the shop floor should be one level. If this is unavoidable, alternatives should be investigated such as an internal non-slip ramp.

Entrance doors should be clearly marked out and distinguishable from the shop window. Good lighting and variation in materials can be used to aid visibility, particularly those with limited sight.

Door furniture should be easy to use and contrast with the door itself.

For further information on accessibility, please contact the Parish Council and we can help direct you to the relevant guidance and organisations.

5. Creating attractive window displays

A shop window display should be maintained at all times. Solid or partly infilled windows or obscure glazing, posters covering the window or plastic window vinyl should be avoided in occupied shop units.

Shop window displays should enhance the street scene and reflect the features and proportions of the building's exterior.

Where a unit with street frontage becomes vacant, efforts should be made to maintain a clean and uncluttered shop window and any visible space behind it. If a unit is vacant for a long period the window space should be used inventively to maintain interest in the street and property itself.

6. Integrating security features & ventilation

Security devices should have a minimal impact on the architectural features and the appearance of a building and the street scene.

Roller shutters are unlikely to be considered acceptable but please seek further advice.

Toughened security glass is recommended as the most appropriate material for window security. Internally fitted grilles or mesh shutters are more suitable where toughened glass is not appropriate.

Shutter box housing should be located within the shop front itself or behind the fascia.

Careful consideration should be given to the size, location and fitting of air conditioning units, satellite dishes and flues. Refer to the Historic England guide for further advice.



7. Positioning suitable fascia's and signage

Fascia design should be sensitively positioned across the shop front and should not

- Obscure the first floor windows or window sills
- Extend uninterrupted across a number of buildings
- Cover or ignore any architectural details such as corbels or pilasters
- Protrude out from the building further than a depth of 0.15m to 0.25m
- Form more than 20% of the overall height or surface area of the shop front
- Contain advertisements for other shop or products

Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the sign dimensions. Advertisement consent must be sought where the lettering on the fascia is over 0.75m in height. The fascia sign should only state useful details which relate to the premise, (e.g. name and unit number). The most effective fascia design consist of hand painted lettering or raised metal / timber letters with a matt finish and consist of dark lettering on a light background.

Colour palettes should be carefully considered and should respect the Georgian identity of the High Street. Branding can be retained without compromising the Georgian integrity of the High Street.

Designs should also avoid the following:

- Oversized lettering and too much information
- Plastic or highly reflective materials
- Garish colours that present a poor quality image
- Images from clip art or cartoons
- Poorly designed illuminated signs, (e.g. back lit).

Only one hanging or projecting sign per shop is considered acceptable. Projecting or hanging signs should be positioned to the left side of the fascia and should not project more than 0.9m from the face of the building or be larger than 0.75m x 0.9m (0.675m²).



Installing well-designed canopies and awnings

Canopies or awnings or any type that obscure the shop front should be avoided.

All canopies or awnings should be at least 2.4m above the footpath once fully extended but should not be fixed to the building any higher than ground floor level.

A width of at least 1m from the outer edge of the canopy or awning to the kerb line should be maintained at all times.

Product advertising on canopies or awnings should be avoided.

Canopies or awnings made of plastic or PC materials should be avoided.



CHECKLIST AND CONTACT DETAILS

In order to design a successful and attractive shopfront, make sure you can tick the following boxes:

- Check which permission and licences you will need.
- Make sure any traditional shop front features are retained.
- Proportion the shop front features with the front of the building and the rest of the street.
- Check whether the building is Listed or in the Conservation Area.
- Choose an appropriate type and range of materials for the shop front.
- Make sure the shop is accessible to all, including those with disabilities.
- Design attractive window displays and the make sure the windows are clear and not obscured.
- Secure the shop with integrated security features which do not have a negative impact on the shop front appearance.
- Add fascias and signage which are well designed and in proportion with the rest of the shop front.
- Chose an appropriate awning or canopy design and style if required.

Please contact the Parish Council if you would like any more information. We have a dedicated team of volunteers who are happy to help.

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Leeds City Council: www.leeds.gov.uk/planning