

Supplementary planning guidance 4

Security measures for shopfronts and commercial premises

Adopted July 1996 - amended April 2020*

*Updated to reflect the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy and to make document accessible



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Introduction

The Borough Council aims to protect and enhance the character of its shopping streets and local shopping centres by requiring high standards of shopfront design. It is important that shops and shopping centres are as attractive as possible if the town centre and local shopping centres are to prosper. The need for security is recognised, but the council seeks to balance the security considerations with the need to preserve the amenity of the locality.

Certain security measures have a much greater impact upon the external appearance of buildings and the locality than others. A variety of measures will be referred to in this supplementary guidance and their relative merits discussed.

These policies and guidelines set the standards by which proposals for shopfront security will be judged throughout the Borough.

Legislation

Planning permission is required for the material alteration or replacement of a shopfront and for the installation of permanent security shutters and grilles on the external face of a building, including an external shutter box.

Where the property is a listed building, listed building consent will also be required for these works. In addition, consent will be required for any alteration, demolition or extension, internally or externally, or for any new fixtures to the building.

Local plan policies

Policy TC9 of the Borough of Gravesham Local Plan First Review makes specific reference to security grilles and shutters. It states that the Borough Council will resist developments which would result in the installation of security grilles and shutters on the exterior of shopfronts but that where there is an identified need for such security measures, this consideration will be balanced with the need to preserve amenity.

General advice

It should be born in mind that grilles and shutters are only two examples of a number of different measures that can be adopted to improve the security of business premises. Details of other, more aesthetically pleasing measures will be referred to. Applicants seeking planning permission will be expected to have investigated all alternatives.

Areas which lack activity or appear deserted can be attractive to criminals, who perceive that they are less likely to be detected. Therefore the creation of a fortress-like atmosphere can be self-defeating. Roller shutters create a 'dead' frontage and thus contribute to this atmosphere, having an adverse environmental effect. For these reasons, roller shutters will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Open grilles and other security measures let light from the premises out onto the street, allowing the shop window display to be seen. This aids security and helps to maintain the attractiveness of the area. These methods of security are therefore likely to be considered more favourably by the Borough Council.

Security measures - detailed guidelines

Laminated glass

Laminated glass provides security without affecting the appearance of a property and is the first solution that should be considered. Planning permission is not required for its installation. This type of glass is very difficult to penetrate, as the broken glass remains adhered to a plastic interlayer. [If the property is a listed building, listed building consent will be required for its installation.](#)

Changing the shopfront

Small paned windows are less of a temptation to wilful damage and cheaper to replace. Redesigning an existing shopfront to incorporate smaller panes is an option which owners are encouraged to investigate. Planning permission may be required for those alterations in some circumstances and will always be required for listed buildings. Owners should consult with a planning officer prior to carrying out any works to the property.

Internal grilles

Internal grilles do not require planning permission and are the next most favourable solution. Listed building consent may be required for fitting grilles to listed buildings. The pattern of the grille must be sympathetic to the character of the building.

Planning permission may be required if a material alteration is carried out to the shopfront.

Removable/demountable grilles

These grilles are applied to the external face of a shopfront and, if internal grilles are unsuitable, can be an acceptable solution provided that:

1. the grilles or shutters are subtle in design, having a minimal impact on the shopfront;
2. the fixings are concealed or painted to match the shopfront;
3. the fixings do not damage or obscure architectural features or mouldings;
4. the grilles cover the individual sections of the shopfront only;
5. the grilles do not obscure existing pilasters or stallrisers;
6. the grilles are colour finished to match the shopfront;
7. the grilles are removed during opening hours and stored out of sight.

For listed buildings, consent will be required for the use of removable/demountable grilles or shutters. Wooden shutters may be an appropriate treatment on listed buildings and in conservation areas.

External roller grilles

External roller grilles require planning permission. They may be considered acceptable depending on the location of the property, its relation to existing commercial premises, the quality of the existing shopfront and those in the locality. External roller grilles will only be permitted in conservation areas in exceptional circumstances. On listed buildings, external roller grilles may be considered acceptable but will require listed building consent.

Where there is concern that external roller grilles will not provide sufficient protection from missiles and objects which can break the glass, polycarbonate backing can be used behind the grille to resist this.

Where such grilles are considered to be acceptable in principle, the following elements should be incorporated:

1. the grille boxes should be concealed behind the fascia or flush beneath it. Where, in exceptional circumstances, the box has to be exposed, it should be clad in suitable materials and/or colour finished to match the shopfront;
2. the guidance channels should be concealed or painted to match the shopfront or be removed during the day;
3. the grilles should be colour finished to match the shopfront;
4. in most circumstances, the line of the grille should follow any recesses which form the shopfront;

5. the grille should be fitted so as not to obscure any existing pilasters and should be no lower than the top of the existing stallriser;
6. the grilles should not obscure or damage any other architectural features.

Roller shutters

Roller shutters require planning permission and are generally considered unacceptable. This category of shutter includes those solid roller shutters with viewing panels, perforations, cutouts or holes. Listed building consent is unlikely to be granted for roller shutters on listed buildings. On buildings within conservation areas, planning permission is unlikely to be given. Planning permission in other situations may only be granted if the following exceptional circumstances apply:

1. the applicant must demonstrate, by documentary evidence, that a persistent security problem exists which could only be resolved by the use of solid roller shutters, as opposed to other security measures, eg grilles;
2. the property should be in an isolated situation, where there is no particular need to maintain a shopfront display;
3. any such scheme should be commensurate with the overall aim of achieving a variety of subtle but secure shopfront security measures

If it is considered that the provision of roller shutters is acceptable in principle. Their installation and design should be carried out as sensitively as possible and the following elements should be incorporated:

1. shutter boxes should be located and designed in accordance with the advice for grille boxes;
2. the guidance channels should be concealed or painted to match the shopfront, or be removed during the day;
3. in all circumstances, the shutter shall be sensitively detailed to give relief to the surface of the shutter, to minimise the visual impact;
4. in most circumstances, the shutter should be fitted so as not to obscure any existing pilasters and should be no lower than the top of the stallriser;
5. shutters should not obscure or damage any other architectural features;
6. shutters should have no viewing panels, but should be perforated and colour finished to match the shopfront;
7. consideration should also be given to incorporating quality sign writing, detailing the name and/or trade of the business. This may require advertisement consent, involving a separate application.

Other security measures

Other measures, such as external sliding or demountable wooden shutters, will be considered on their merits, having regard to the advice contained in this supplementary guidance.

Advice and further information

For general enquiries on Planning Consent please visit our website [Do I need planning?](#)

At <https://www.gravesham.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building/do-i-need-planning-permission/overview>

If you are unsure about the need for planning permission you are advised to consult the Council's Development Management team before undertaking any works to the property by emailing planning.admin@gravesham.gov.uk