

Shopfront design sheets 1 - 6

5. Signs and advertisement; fascia, projecting signs, lettering and lighting

Informal Guidance to Support SPG3 and SPG4



Delivering a Gravesham to be proud of

Design sheet 5: signs and advertisement – fascia, projecting signs, lettering, and lighting

Unlike the replacement or alteration of shopfronts, most signage enjoys ‘deemed consent’ under Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations 1992. In Conservation Areas, however, ‘Advertisement Consent’ is required for most signage that is illuminated. On listed buildings or structures, ‘Listed Building Consent’ will be required for most signage if it affects their appearance or character.

Cluttered, poorly designed or brightly-lit advertisement can have an adverse effect on the environment, and the Council has powers to control the most prominent outdoor advertisement. Additional powers exist in parts of Meopham, Luddesdown and Cobham which have been designated as Areas of Special Control for Advertisements in order to protect their attractive landscapes.

On listed buildings and in Conservation Areas or other sensitive historic areas the Council expects the standard of advertisement to be of high quality and not to detract from their appearance. The following guidance seeks to encourage improvement to advertisement design in the interest of amenity, without damaging the viability of shops.

As a rule, retailers are expected to show restraint and not to engage in an excessive visual competition with neighbouring premises. Often, subtle and simple schemes with regard to colours, size, design and lettering work best.



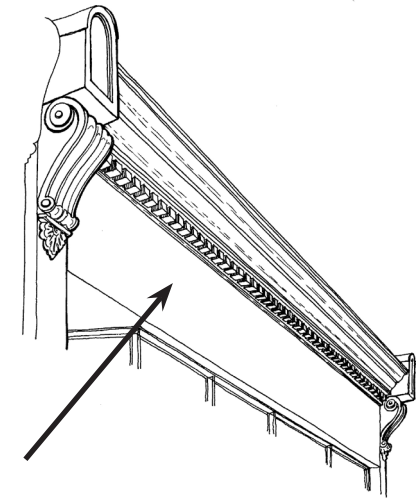
Examples of traditional signs and advertisements

Fascia

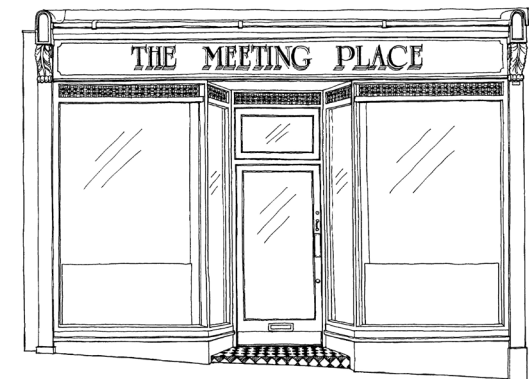
The fascia is the space that advertises the business and thus is the most noticeable element of a shopfront. Its design needs careful consideration.

Design Principles

- Where a business occupies more than one building, the fascia should not extend uninterrupted across two or more shopfronts, particularly where the buildings are of different architectural character.
- Proportion the fascia appropriately with regard to the scale and overall height of the building. Excessively deep (i.e. high) fascias should be avoided.
- The fascia should not extend beyond the pilasters/vertical shop front surround and not obstruct any other architectural detail, such as the cornices and corbels. It should not intrude into the first floor level and obscure the first floor window sills.
- Lettering or sign writing should usually be applied directly to the fascia. Avoid adding new fascia boards to an existing one.
- Modern boxed fascias, which project from the face of the building, with internal illumination are not acceptable in historic areas.
- Large areas of highly polished finishes, glossy plastic or Perspex are unlikely to be acceptable on historic buildings.
- Corporate organisations are required to show flexibility and adapt their advertising and signs to suit their sensitive surroundings.



The fascia is the most noticeable element of the shop front

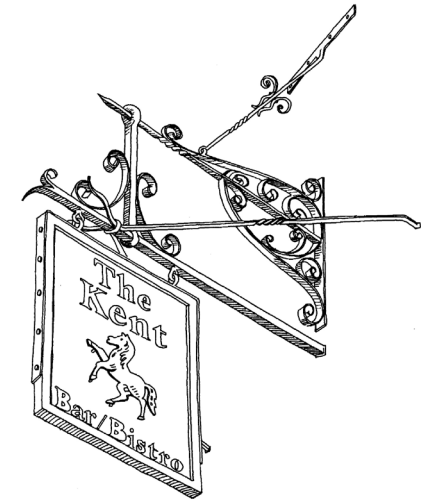


Traditional sign writing applied directly to the fascia

Projecting Signs

Projecting signs are a traditional form of additional advertising of commercial premises. If thoughtfully designed in a way that complements the colour and design of the fascia, it can add interest and originality to a building and street scene.

- In historic areas traditional signs that take the form of swinging signs hung from decorative wrought iron brackets are the most appropriate.
- There should not be more than one hanging sign per shopfront.
- In the interests of highway safety, signs should keep a certain vertical clearance from the pavement to the underside of the sign and should not project over the carriage way or conceal traffic signs.
- Signs should not obscure any views from windows and views onto existing signs to an unreasonable extent.
- Traditionally, the position for hanging signs has been at first floor window level, but each application will be looked at on its own merit with regard to the most appropriate position in relation to the shopfront and the rest of the building.



Traditional hand painted hanging sign with decorative wrought iron bracket

Lettering

- The Fascia should normally state only the name or trade of the business and the street number. Avoid oversized lettering and the application of too much additional information. This can result in an unattractive appearance and visual cluttering, which is not acceptable. A more restrained use of signage and graphics works best.
- On wooden fascias the lettering should usually be hand painted. Traditionally the shopfront and fascia were painted in a muted colour with contrasting white, cream or gilt lettering. Individually fixed lettering (brass or other metal) is also a suitable solution.



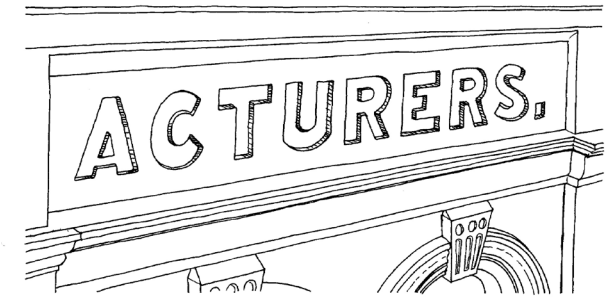
Traditional hand painted fascia

- Letters should be sensibly proportioned in relation to the fascia. Usually they should not exceed 60 percent of the depth of the fascia. Upper case lettering is often the most appropriate on a traditional shopfront.

Lighting

Internal lighting of shopfronts tends to add positively to an area, inviting to window shopping out of business hours and adding security by deterring vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Shop signs on the other hand should not need any special illumination where the level of street lighting and the light from the shop windows are adequate. Normally, only late opening premises, such as public houses and restaurants, should actually require additional illumination.

- Where external lighting is required it should be restricted to an absolute minimum and discreetly positioned, otherwise Advertisement Consent will not be granted.
- Wholly internally illuminated box signs, fascias and individual signs will not generally be acceptable unless this was a historic feature of the original shopfront.
- Rows of brass swan necked spotlights or other long stemmed projecting lamps are not acceptable in historic areas. Trough lights extending over the full length of the fascia should equally be avoided due to their visual impact, unless they can be concealed within or beneath the cornice of the fascia.
- Lighting brackets should be either of a traditional or an unobtrusive, simple modern design and should be painted to match the background colour of the building (if this is rendered) or in black, or bronze anodised.
- Acceptable forms of lighting could include halo lighting (where letters stand proud of the fascia and are individually illuminated from behind) or discreet hooded spotlights. Neon and fluorescent lighting tends to be out of place in historic areas and other areas of significant amenity value.



Upper case lettering on a traditional shopfront