

## Shopfront design sheets 1- 6

### **1. Introduction to the general principles of shopfront design, access to upper floors and the need for consent**

Informal Guidance to Support SPG3 and SPG4



## Design sheet 1: Introduction to the general principles of shopfront design, access to upper floors and the need for consent

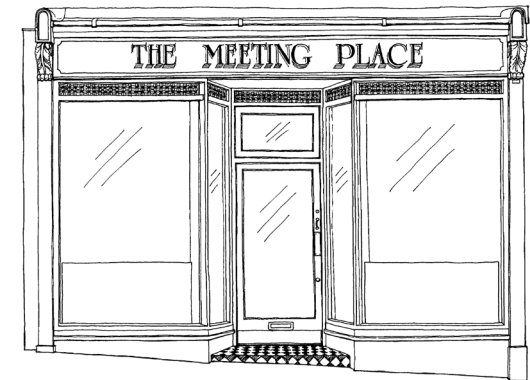
The appearance of shopfronts in a town centre or local shopping area has a profound impact on the character of a place. Poorly designed and badly maintained street frontages detract from the visual qualities of an area and affect the retail viability and local economy.

The purpose of this guide is to encourage greater care in shopfront design and promote high quality design standards with the aim of creating enjoyable and attractive shopping areas in Gravesham. The principles outlined in this guidance are particularly appropriate in the context of historic streets and conservation areas. Here, a traditional shopfront design is generally the most suitable solution. Innovative, contemporary designs are welcomed, though certain principles with regard to proportions, detailing and quality of materials remain valid and must be taken into consideration..

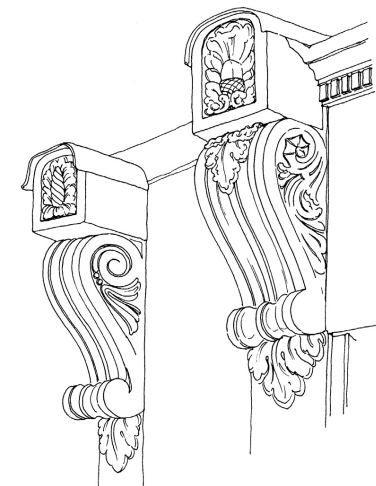
Shops in Gravesham make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the borough and its attractiveness. The design and appearance of shops play an essential role in ensuring that the shopping centres continues to thrive and prosper.

To understand the issues this guidance has been arranged in six sections

1. - Introduction to the general principles of shopfront design, access to upper floors and the need for consent
2. - Elements of a traditional shop front
3. - Design details
4. - Materials and finish
5. - Signs and advertisement
6. - Canopies, blinds and security



Traditional shopfront in Gravesend town centre



Traditional corbels positioned on fascia of a traditional shopfront

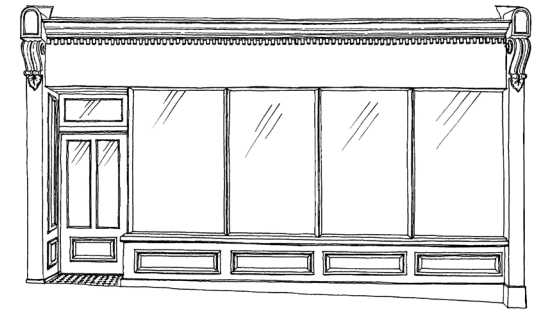
## General Principles of Shopfront Design

Most shops tend to change hands frequently during the lifetime of the building of which they form part. This is often accompanied by changes to the shopfront in order to adapt it to the requirements of the new business. However, these changes should not lead to a disruption of the building's frontage and the street rhythm in order to achieve short term requirements. Schemes need to be sympathetic to their context.

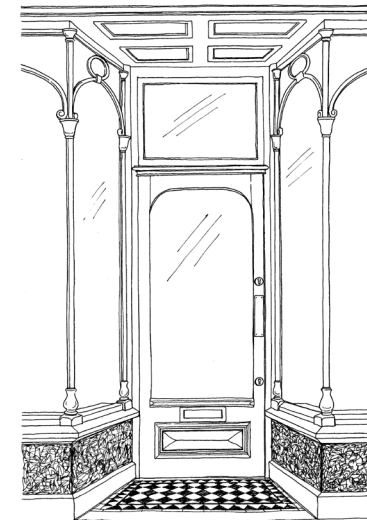
- Where a shopfront of merit exists, dating from before the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and/or is of traditional design, this should be retained.
- If the existing shopfront needs replacement, consider at the outset the character and appearance of the individual building and the street as a whole: Is the design appropriate to the age, style and proportions of the building above and the neighbouring buildings?
- Decide on the type of trading image that is to be projected and the sort of display area required.
- Design a scheme at the outset that might cater for the different requirements of possible future businesses, i.e. security, sunblinds, independent access to upper floors etc. to avoid a jumble of later additions.
- If of a traditional design, ensure that the replacement shopfront does not appear to be older in style than the building of which it forms part.

## Corporate Identity

National chains tend to promote their national identity by using a standardised shop front design, colours, letters and logos. These are not necessarily acceptable in sensitive historic streets and conservation areas, therefore retailers may be required to modify and adapt their design to suit the location.



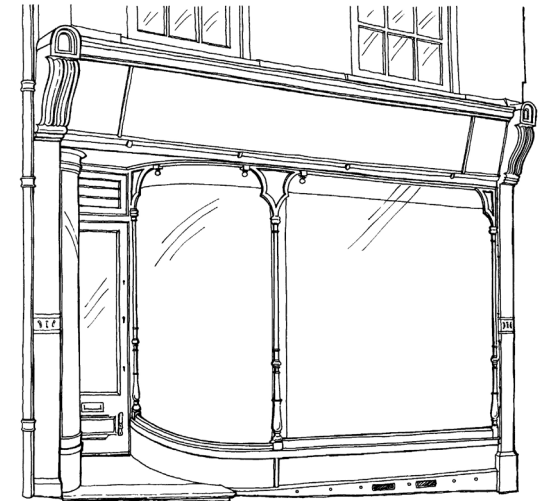
Replacement shopfront should consider the appearance of the individual building and the area as a whole. High Street Gravesend replacements shopfront circa 2000



Example of a traditional shop doorway in Gravesend town centre. Where a shopfront of merit exists, dating from before the 20<sup>th</sup> century or is of a traditional design, it should be retained.

## Relationship to Structure

- Relate the shopfront to the building's scale, proportions and structure. Many historic buildings are of small scale and have vertical (taller than wider) proportions.
- Provide the shopfront with a clearly defined framework in order to give visual support to the building above.
- Avoid large and long panes of glass. Divide the window space into panes that relate to the proportions of the building above.
- Where the shop occupies more than one unit, retain the pattern of individual shopfronts/buildings.
- Proportion the individual elements of a shopfront to achieve a balanced appearance.



Many historic buildings are of small scale and have vertical (taller than wider) proportions

## Access to Upper Floors

Many buildings in the Borough's town centres were not built as shops originally, but were houses. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, the ground floor was often converted to retail use with a shopfront subsequently inserted to the street elevation. The upper storeys served as living accommodation for the owner or used for storage. Today, many of the upper floors in town-centres are vacant or under-used, and often under-maintained. The Borough Council encourages the re-use of upper floors as a means to revitalise the commercial centres and make them more secure.

- Where an independent access to these areas exists this should be retained as part of any proposal for a new shopfront, and its removal will not normally be permitted.
- Any new access to the upper floors should be provided from the front of the building in preference to the rear of the property.
- Doors to upper floors should be treated as an integral part of the design.



Doors to upper floors should be treated as integral to the design of the shopfront

## The Need for Consent

Planning Permission is needed for the replacement of an existing shopfront or the installation of a new shopfront, or any alterations, which would materially affect the external appearance of the building. These may include the change of the fascia and shop sign, glazing, facing materials or the installation of blinds or shutters.

In Conservation Areas, planning policies (CS19 and CS20) seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Here, a new shopfront must be designed in sympathy with the historic setting and architectural character of the area. Planning permission may be required for works to unlisted buildings if substantial demolition is proposed.

If the building is listed, Listed Building Consent will normally be required for the replacement of a shopfront or for any alteration to the interior or exterior. This can include what might appear a minor change, such as modifications to the window frames, painting and glazing, the installation of canopies, security alarms and CCTV cameras.

In the interest of amenity, Advertisement Consent is needed for the most prominent outdoor advertisement. Information can be found in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 3: Advertisement Control Policy Guidance.