

7 Shopfronts

KEY MESSAGES

Shopfront alterations should respect the detailed design, materials, colour and architectural features of the shopfront and building itself.

This section provides information on how to deal with the five key shopfront features:

- Shopfront components,
- Signs and lighting,
- Blinds and canopies,
- Security shutters,
- Cash machines.

- 7.1 Well designed shopfronts increase the attractiveness of a building and the local area and can have an impact on commercial success by increasing the attraction of shops and shopping centres to customers. This is particularly important in town centres and the character and appearance of where conservation area and listed buildings. On the other hand, insensitive shopfront design can harm the appearance and character of buildings and shopping areas
- 7.2 This guidance relates to Core Strategy Policy – CS14 – Promoting High Quality places and Conserving Our Heritage and Development Plan Policies – DP30 – Shopfronts – and to planning applications for new shopfronts and alterations for existing.



When does this guidance apply?

General

- 7.3 This guidance applies to all applications which may materially alter the external appearance of a building or any element of the historic environment and therefore may require planning permission, or conservation area or listed building consent.

- 7.4 You will generally need planning permission for:
- a new shopfront;
 - alterations to an existing shopfront including awnings and canopies, external security shutters, blinds, grilles and security measures; and
 - change of use will generally require planning permission.
- 7.5 Planning permission is not normally required for routine maintenance works, such as redecoration or straightforward repairs. For further detailed guidance check with the Council.
- 7.6 Any alterations (or replacement) of shopfronts that form part of a listed building will require Listed Building Consent and will need to be consistent with the age and style of the building. For further information see the chapter 3 Heritage of this CPG. More stringent controls will apply for the following works:
- re-painting a shopfront in a different colour,
 - installing a security alarm or extractor fan,
 - altering the shop interior,
 - installing blinds or shutters, and
 - advertisements.
- 7.7 Conservation Area Consent is required for the proposed complete or substantial demolition of any building in a conservation area. This includes the removal of a shopfront or of any feature that gives character to a building. In assessing applications to alter shopfronts within conservation areas special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas (for further information see chapter 3 Heritage of this CPG).
- 7.8 For shops in conservation areas, reference should also be made to the relevant Conservation Area Statement/Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Strategy (there are 39 in total). These describe the area and its special character and include guidelines that provide the framework for development proposals in the area and the appraisals contain audits of shopfronts of merit.
- 7.9 Advertisement consent is a separate procedure that applies to the display of advertisements on shopfronts. You can find further guidance in the document Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers (CLG, 2007) and chapter 8 'Advertisements, signs and hoardings' of this CPG).

BUILDING REGULATIONS APPROVAL

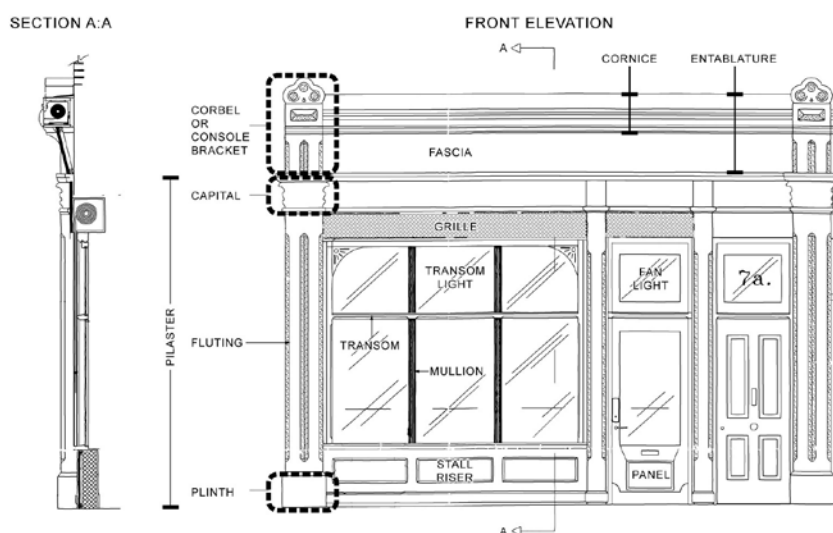
You need building regulations approval for all work which alters the shop's structure, entrance arrangement, changes its fire escape, or affects the level of access currently provided.

Guidance for Shopfronts

Design and appearance of shopfronts

- 7.10 The basic architectural features that make up shopfronts are illustrated in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Shopfront elements



General principles

- 7.11 Shopfront alterations should respect the detailed design, materials, colour and architectural features of the shopfront and building itself, the following will need to be considered:
- Historic, locally distinctive or characteristic shopfronts which contribute to the townscape should be retained. In some cases the reinstatement of missing features will be encouraged.
 - New shopfronts should be designed as part of the whole building and should sensitively relate to the scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and surrounding facades.
 - Shopfronts forming part of a larger new development should be considered as an integral part of the overall design.
 - Standardised “house-style” frontages may have to be amended in order to harmonise with the surrounding context and respect the building, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings.
 - All shopfronts should be designed to provide access into the premises for all.

Key shopfront components

- 7.12 The following are key shopfront design components you need to consider when making alterations to an existing shopfront:

Window Displays

- The window display is the main visual element of a shopfront. Shop frontages should be largely glazed to maintain a window display rather than creating a solid frontage (including obscured glass) which will be discouraged.
- On traditional shopfronts large expanse of undivided glass should be avoided. Vertical glazing bars (mullions) should be used to subdivide large windows to help visually relate the shopfront with the upper elevations of the building.

Entrances

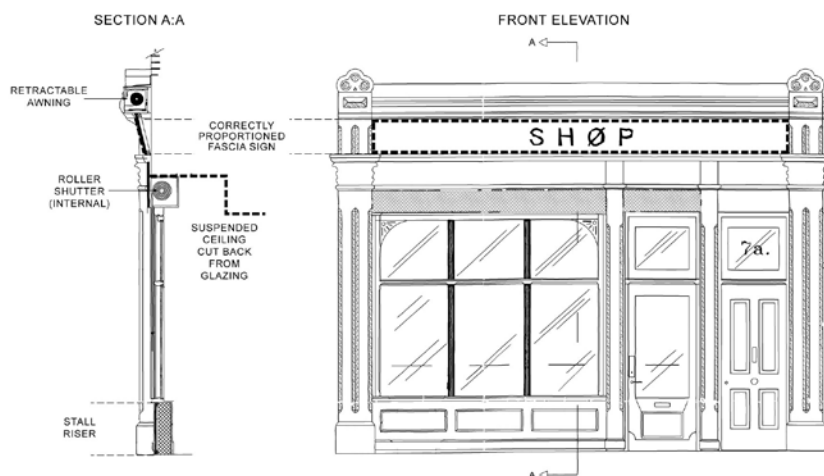
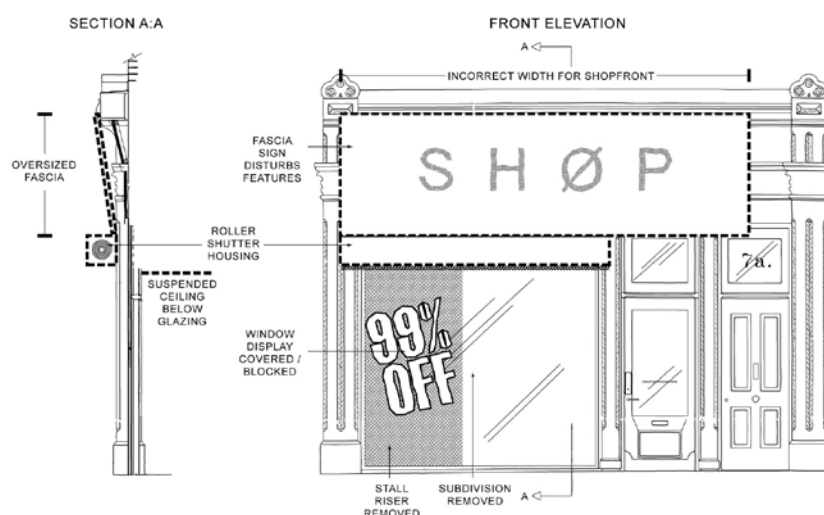
- The design of the door should be in keeping with the other elements of the shopfront. The solid bottom panel should align with the stallriser. The top of the door should align with the transom.
- Decorative tiling should be retained.
- All new build shop units and shopfronts should be designed to be fully accessible to everyone.
- In the case of existing buildings, particularly where a new shop front is proposed, the following guidance should be followed:
 - Shops that have a change in level from pavement to shop floor surface can usually incorporate ramped access into or within the shop. Exceptions preventing a ramped area to be created may include the presence of structural beams or floor slabs..
 - Entrance doors should be accessible to all, particularly wheelchair users and people with limited manual dexterity. 1000mm minimum clear door width in new buildings and 775mm door width in existing buildings where a new shop front or alterations to a shop front are proposed.
- to ensure that services are reasonably accessible to disabled people refer to Camden Planning Guidance on Access for all.

Shopfront recess

- Where there is an existing shopfront recess - often found in older traditional shopfronts e.g. listed buildings and conservation areas - they should be retained.
- Traditional horizontally-operated lattice security gates can in some cases be employed to protect recessed shop entrances, but they should not extend across windows. On traditional shopfronts, removable timber or metal lattice style shutters is often more appropriate.
- New recesses in shopfronts will be strongly discouraged due to their potential for attracting anti-social behaviour.

Fascias

- The fascia should be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should not normally extend above the cornice or below the capital as it would upset the overall balance and proportions of a shopfront or parade (see Figure 9 and Figure 10).
- Fascia signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features. Deep box fascias which project beyond the shopfront frame should be avoided.
- Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. To aid identification, fascia signs should include the street number of the premises.
- Where a shopfront and fascia extend across two or more shop unit bays, the removal of intervening pilasters are not acceptable as it would:
 - weaken the frame's visual support to the upper floors; and
 - disrupt the character and rhythm of a shopping frontage created by the widths of individual shopfronts.
- Lettering on fascia signs should be proportionate to the scale of the shopfront. Main fascias should also be of a suitable size and proportion in relation to the building and should sit between cornice and shopfront itself and should not project above or below the cornice level obscuring upper floor or shop windows.
- Fascia and box signs should not obscure or damage existing architectural features.

Figure 9. Good shopfront section and elevation**Figure 10. Inappropriate shopfront section and elevation**

Pilasters

- New pilasters are preferably placed in line with solid wall, not windows above, to emphasise their function. This is particularly important in the case of shopping frontages on sloping sites where existing stepped profiles of fascias and stallrisers should be preserved or reintroduced wherever possible.

Stallrisers

- Stallrisers consist of solid elements below shop windows. They form a base to the shopfront display, and prevent the glazing from being damaged or soiled.
- Stallrisers should be retained and generally incorporated to any new shopfront on a period buildings.

- Where stallrisers are provided, they should be at least 300mm high or to the top of the pilaster base or door panel and faced in appropriate materials for the context. They should not provide ledges that can be sat upon. Glazing should be brought to the front of a stallriser.

Colour and materials

- Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to their location. Traditional materials such as timber, stone and render are the most appropriate for new shopfronts, particularly for listed buildings and in conservation areas.
- More contemporary materials such as colour-coated steel, aluminium and bronze instead of timber may be appropriate in some circumstances.
- Existing glazed brickwork or tiling should be retained.
- Colour schemes for shopfronts and in particular the projecting framework should be carefully considered, particularly in conservation areas and for listed buildings.
- Proposals should be accompanied by full details of materials, finishes and colours (or sample and specification cards).

Folding shopfronts

- Folding shopfronts are not generally acceptable, particularly those on historic buildings such as listed buildings and those in Conservation Areas. When open, they erode the appearance of the shopfront, creating a visual void, and can increase disturbance to neighbouring properties, particularly in the case of food and drink premises. When closed they appear as a row of doors rather than a shopfront. This creates a heavier appearance than a shopfront mullion and reduces the area of glass in the shopfront.

Lightwells / grilles

- Pavement lights or small lightwells covered with metal grilles are typically found in front of shopfronts. These provide light into the areas beneath whilst allowing shoppers close inspection of the window display.
- Creating open lightwells with railings in front of a shopfront is not generally acceptable as it prevents window shopping and disrupts the building's relationship to the rhythm of the street. This is also the case if the shopfront has been converted into residential accommodation.

Advertisements and signs

- 7.13 Shops and businesses need to ensure that their name and other details are clearly displayed on their premises and, as a result, signs are among the most prominent forms of advertising on buildings. However, signs that are unsympathetically designed can cause significant harm to the building and the local townscape. Signs should relate well to the

character, scale and architectural features of the building and respect their local context.

- 7.14 Properties should only have one main fascia sign and one ancillary projecting or hanging sign per street frontage, although two projecting signs may be appropriate in cases of large shopfronts stretching across two or more shop units. Too many adverts/signs on a property contribute to visual clutter and can detract from the appearance of the street scene.

Projecting and hanging signs

- 7.15 Projecting and hanging signs should normally be level with the fascia rather than below or above it. They should be positioned to the side of the shopfront at fascia level.
- 7.16 Signs at upper floor levels will be discouraged. Advertising for upper floor premises by lettering on windows or by suspended banners on large frontages will only be considered acceptable where advertising a specific event for a temporary period.
- 7.17 Advert signs - including those on canopies/blinds, should:
- be considered as an integral part of a shopfront or building, designed in from the outset with new structures;
 - be in harmony with the existing building, and neighbouring ones, in terms of their proportions, design and materials;
 - See Camden Planning Guidance on Advertisements, signs and hoardings.

Canopies, awnings and blinds

- 7.18 Blinds can add colour and interest to the street scene. However, it is important to ensure that they do not dominate a shopfront or shop parade.

Canopy

A decorative structure providing a sheltered walk to the entrance of a building.

Awning

A sheet of canvas or synthetic fabric hung above a shopfront as protection against rain or sun

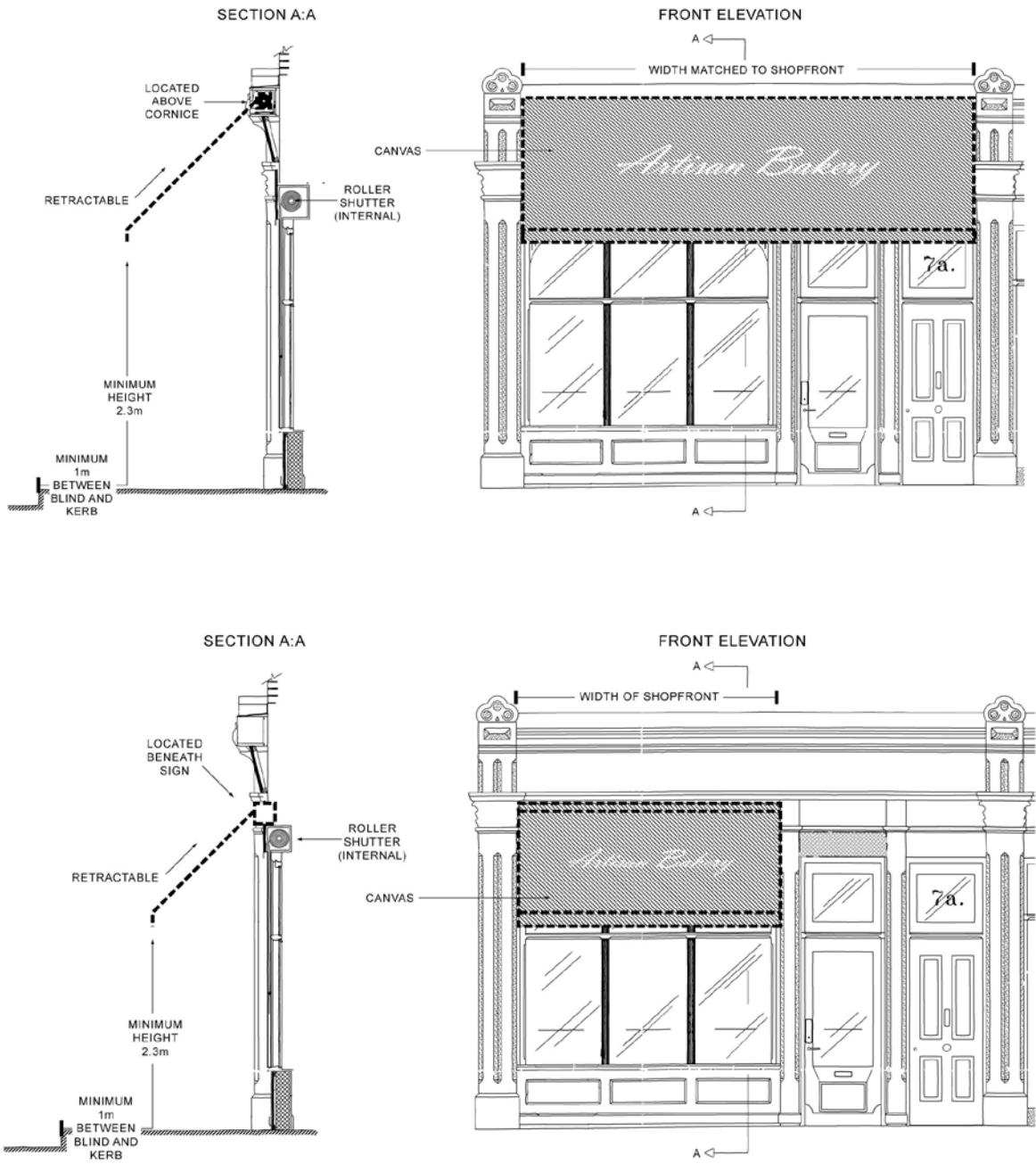
Blind

A structure of canvas or other material stretched used to keep sun or rain off a shop window.

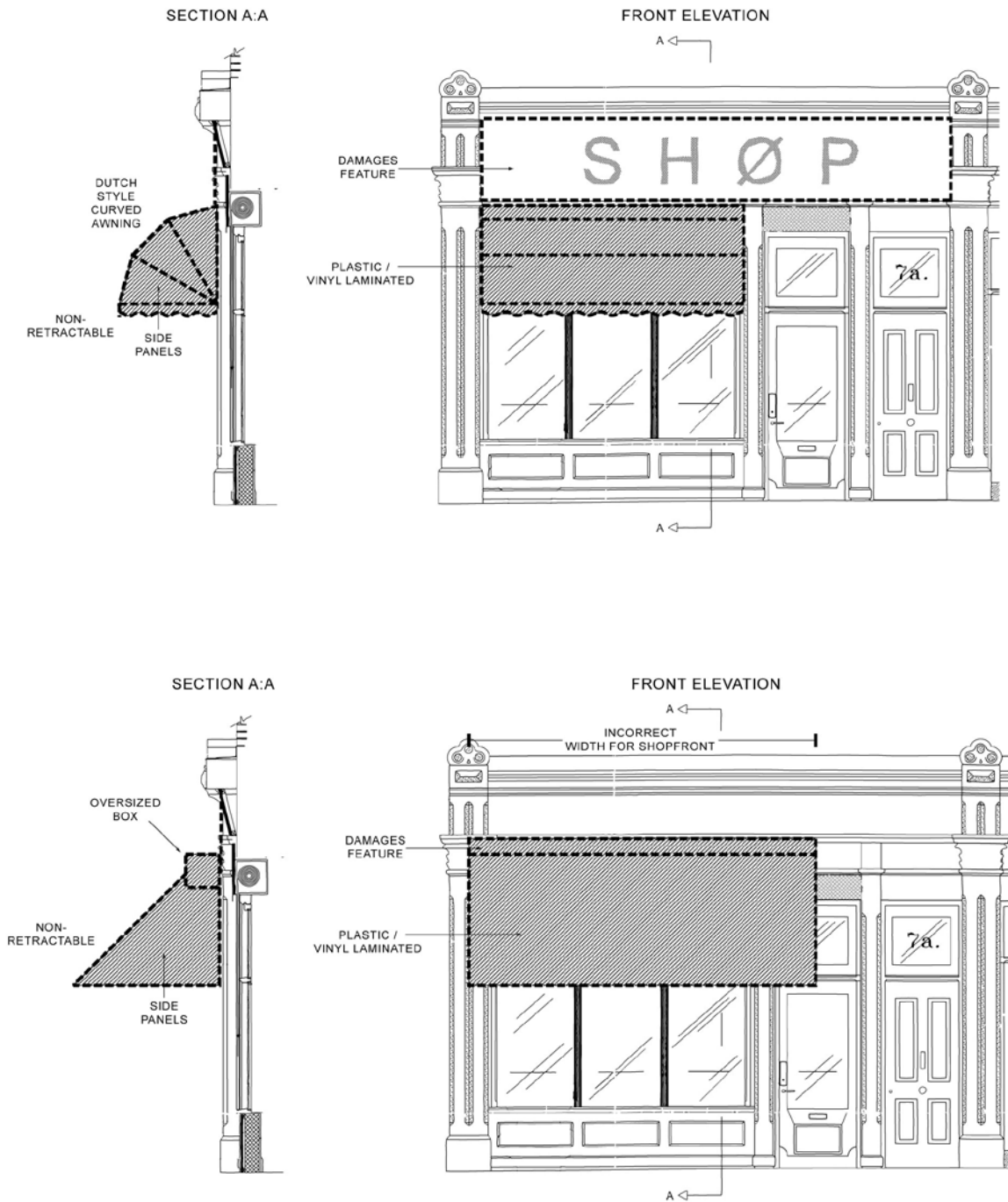
7.19 Shopfront canopies and blinds are only likely to be acceptable where they are:

- retractable;
- traditional canvas;
- blind box integrated with the overall design;
- attached between the fascia and shopfront; and
- be flush with the fascia level.

Figure 11. Appropriate ways to install shopfront awnings



Inappropriate ways to install shopfront awnings



Retractable

- 7.20 Retracting awnings and blinds do not normally require planning permission, although they may require advertisement consent in certain cases. They should not:
- obscure or damage the fascia and other important features of the shopfront and buildings;
 - have discordant and over-dominant shapes, but be appropriate in position, design and materials to the character and scale of both the shopfront, building and locality.

Fixed

- 7.21 Fixed canopies, require planning permission. Acrylic / plastic “Dutch blinds”, or similarly reflective materials will be strongly discouraged, due to their bulk and materials and the resulting visual clutter.

Materials

- 7.22 Canvas blinds are often characteristic features of historic shopfronts and should therefore be retained or replaced using a similar design – acrylic or plastic blinds are not normally suitable.

Signage

- 7.23 Canopies or blinds with signage (a letter or words for advertising purposes or not), they are treated as advertisements and therefore advertisement consent will be required rather than planning permission (See chapter 8 ‘Advertisements, signs and hoardings’ in this CPG).
- 7.24 In general all blinds should be designed and installed to:
- ensure public safety;
 - incorporate a minimum of 2.3 metres between the bottom of the blind and the pavement; and
 - incorporate a minimum of 1 metre between the blind and the kerb edge.

Shopfront security

- 7.25 Security shutters can be visually unattractive and create a 'dead', hostile appearance (especially out of opening hours), which can affect the commercial viability of an area and harm the pedestrian experience.
- 7.26 These guidelines offer suggest the most appropriate means of providing security protection while minimising impacts on the appearance of the shopfront, the building and the character of the area.

Shutters

- 7.27 The Council strongly encourages internal rather than external shopfront security measures. Other forms of enhanced shopfront security should

be considered instead of external shutters. For example, improved internal lighting, alarm systems, the use of toughened or laminated glass, etc. In cases where external measures (shutters, grilles or alarm boxes, etc) are proposed they would only be permitted where they do not harm the character of shopfronts, such as internal brick bond grilles or collapsible gates.

- 7.28 External security shutters will normally require planning permission, whilst internal shutters normally do not. Where internal shutters are installed they should be set back to leave a window display. In the case of listed buildings, the installation of any shopfront security measures, external or internal, will require listed building consent. On listed buildings, there will be a presumption against the use of external security shutters and grilles in favour of internal.
- 7.29 Where an external shutter is proposed it may only be considered acceptable provided it is integrated into the shopfront in terms of design, materials and colour. External measures should avoid using solid roller shutters. This includes the 'pin-hole' versions that rely upon internal illumination for any transparent effect. These designs have negative environmental impacts including:
- obscuring the shopfront and hiding window displays;
 - attracting graffiti;
 - preventing natural surveillance;
 - creating a hostile and unsafe appearance in streets and shopping centres; and
 - being visually unattractive.

Shutter boxes

- 7.30 Shutter boxes should be discrete and should not project forward of the fascia or obscure any architectural features. They should be concealed wherever possible, for example set behind or within the fascia panel, the guide rails concealed within the frame of the shopfront and shutter should be close onto the stallriser.

Grilles

- 7.31 Roller grilles are preferable to solid or pin-hole shutters as they provide security without obscuring window displays and allow views of the shop interior, which enhances surveillance and security.

Removable grilles

- 7.32 Removable or collapsible grilles can be used internally or externally and in both cases allow a certain degree of visibility. These only require planning permission if installed externally. However, listed building consent will also be required for internal grilles in listed buildings.
- 7.33 Removable grilles are expected to remain in place only outside trading hours and should be stored inside at all other times. Any fixings should

be discretely placed and must not harm architectural features or mouldings.

- 7.34 Where there is a recessed entrance it is preferable to install 'Concertina style gate between the openings.

Finishes

- 7.35 All grilles and shutters should have an acceptable finish. They should be coloured (painted, powder coated or stove enamelled) to match the rest of the shopfront, including signs. Uncoated shutters, galvanised steel, a milled finish or anodised aluminium are not considered acceptable finishes. In the exceptional cases where solid shutters are acceptable, original designs by artists will be encouraged provided they respect their location, particularly in Conservation Areas.

Burglar Alarms

- 7.36 Burglar alarm devices must be sited so that they are both adequately visible as a deterrent but do not detract from the visual character of the shopfront.

Cash machines

- 7.37 Cash machines require planning permission and, in the case of listed buildings, listed building consent. Illuminated advertising for cash machines should be discreet and is subject to advertisement consent.
- 7.38 Cash machines (also known as cash points and ATMs) are only likely to be acceptable provided they are:
- treated as an integral part of a building's design wherever possible;
 - not dominant in the shop display frontage in terms of size or materials;
 - positioned sensitively and not be located where queuing could cause problems;
 - with minimal amount of display material;
 - located on the busiest elevation of a building to reduce the risk of robbery;
 - fully accessible to disabled people in both location and detailed arrangement; and
 - in existing bank buildings of traditional design they are most successfully inserted into existing stone recesses or beneath window bays.

Further information

- 7.39 English Heritage has also prepared guidance on heritage assets within:
- English Heritage – ‘Easy Access to Historic Buildings’ 2012 - www.english-heritage.org.uk
 - English Heritage – ‘Easy Access to Historic Landscapes’ 2013 - www.english-heritage.org.uk
- 7.40 For further guidance on how to make shopfronts more accessible to all users as well as disabled users, see:
- The Disability Rights Commission publication “Making access to goods and services easier for disabled customers: A practical guide for businesses and other small service providers
 - BS 8300:2009+A1:2010 ‘Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people’ – Code of Practice’ (BSI)
 - Inclusive Mobility – A guide to best practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, 2005 (Dept for Transport).

