



Supplementary Planning Guidance in Sefton

Shop Fronts Security and Signage

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1 Introduction

a) This guidance note explains how draft Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy MD5 'Commercial Frontages and Security Shutters' will be put into practice. It will also give consideration to draft policies CS3 'Development Principles', DQ1 'Design', MD7 'Advertisements', HC1 'Development in Conservation Areas' and HC3 'Development or Change of Use Affecting a Listed Building'. It sets out:

- Clear principles for modern design that respects the character of the street scene.
- The need for high quality developments that move away from standard mass-produced shop fronts.

b) The design and appearance of shop fronts have a significant effect on local streets.

A well-designed shop front will:

- improve the character of an area;
- make the shop more attractive; and
- meet the needs of the shopkeepers and customers.

So it is important that new or replacement shop fronts in the borough are designed to the highest standard.

c) This guidance note does not remove the need for a designer, but it aims to encourage high-quality, original designs.

2 Shop fronts

a) A well-designed shop front will increase your shop's attractiveness, distinctiveness, accessibility and safety. Because of the varied architectural styles within Sefton, it is not possible to say exactly what 'good design' is in each case. However, the following basic principles are common to all well-designed shop fronts.

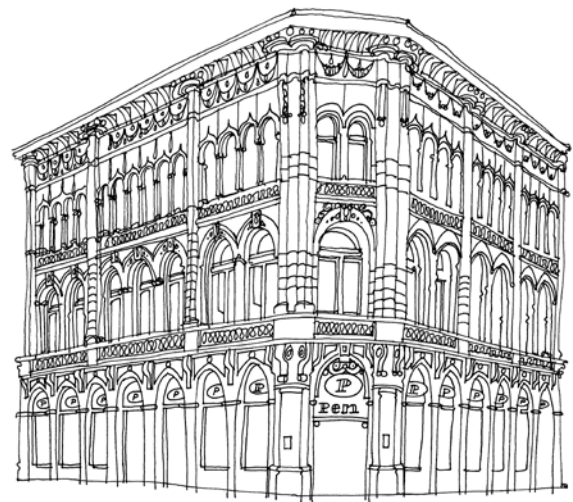
- They are in proportion to the rest of the building.
- They reflect the architectural style of the building.
- Windows are in proportion to the building and set within a visible frame.

- They balance detail and clutter.
- They provide easy and immediate access for all.
- They are relevant to the local area.

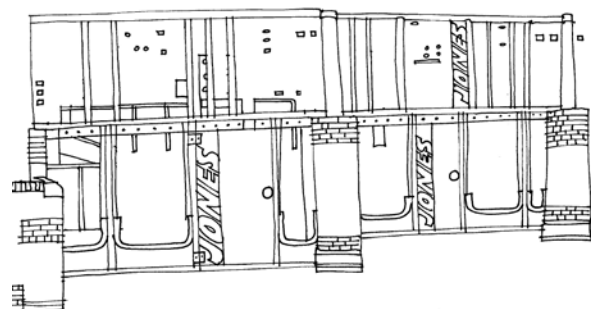
3 Styles of shop fronts

a) We encourage a variety of styles and designs, and what is suitable will depend on the character of your building and its surroundings. Some examples are shown below.

- For buildings with a strong architectural style, a simple framed shop front reflecting the proportions of the building are appropriate. Signs should be painted on the glass or suspended behind it.

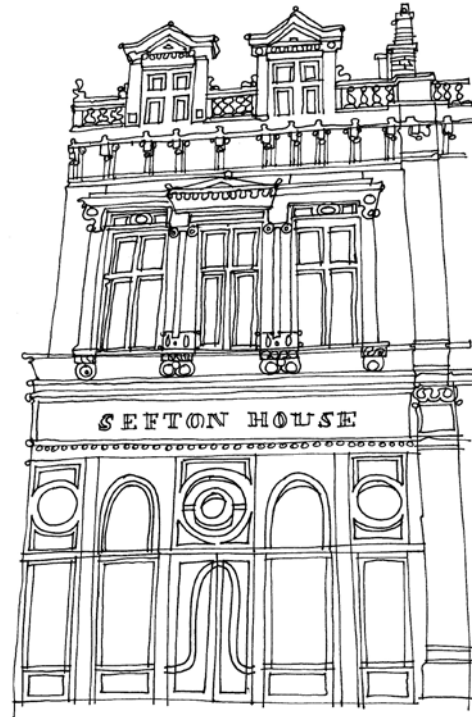


- Modern buildings can also benefit from a well-designed, well-proportioned shop front.



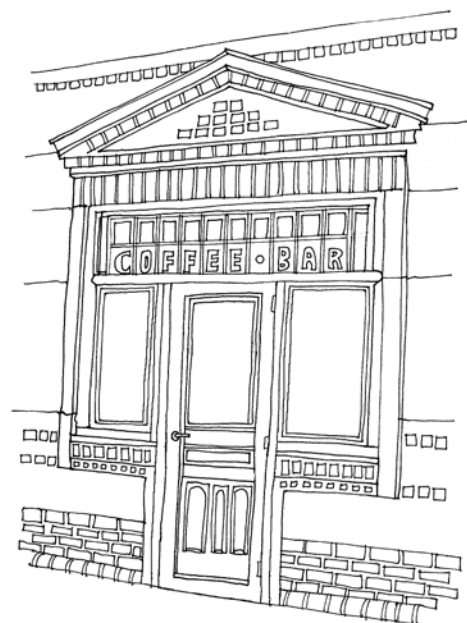


- You can get inspiration from other architectural traditions without compromising the shop fronts' proportions.



- We encourage modern design, whether it is introducing new forms or materials, or interpreting traditional design in a new way. The design should create interest without standing out too much from the rest of the building.

- You can use alternative materials to give a unique look to your shop front. The quality and detail of those materials are vital to the design. Materials could include mosaic tiling, stone cladding, glazed brick and so on.



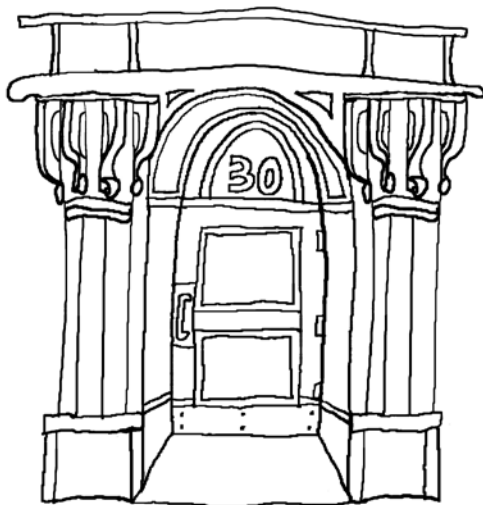


4 Accessibility

Everyone should be able to get into your shop. When you are designing a new shop front, consider providing access for disabled and elderly customers and those with prams and pushchairs.

Good access:

- A wide entrance would allow easier access for those in wheelchairs.
- A recessed door allows for a ramp.
- Kickplates protect the bottom of the door from wheels on wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs.
- Keep the shop front clear of obstructions.



Bad access:

- Narrow doorways and high entrances make it difficult for those with problems walking.
- Windows which go down to the floor may be confused as entrances and so are dangerous.
- Low signs and canopies that stick out can be dangerous and cause an obstruction.
- Displays and A boards outside shops can obstruct pavements.

5 Signs

- Your shop front is very important in promoting your business, and your sign is a vital element of your shop front. Well-designed shop fronts that have informative signs and advertisements can make a positive contribution to the appearance of an area.

Projecting signs

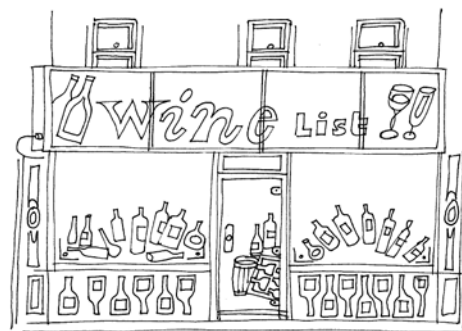
If you want a sign that sticks out from the front of your shop, you can have one projecting sign that provides information relating only to the name and nature of your business.

- Traditional framed and painted hanging signs are more appropriate for older buildings with traditionally designed shop fronts. They should be hung from ornamental metalwork brackets.



- Hanging symbols relating to a shop's business or trade (such as a barber's pole or a chemist's pestle and mortar), look interesting and you can use one of these instead of a projecting sign.

- Box signs that light up are bulky, overdominant and unsightly so you should not use these.



- Modern shop fronts are better placed to include a more modern type of projecting sign.

Fascia signs

- Your shop's fascia sign (the sign on a board over your shop front window) is the most prominent sign for providing essential information about your shop. It should be an integral part of the shop front and not stick out too far. You should have only one fascia sign above each display window. Fascia signs should provide information relating only to the name and nature of your business.



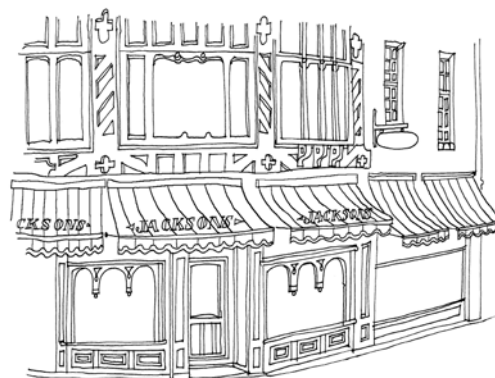
- The fascia sign should be well-proportioned and flush with your shop front. It can also be angled downwards so it can be seen more easily from the pavement. There should be one fascia sign for each building unit. If your shop front has more than one unit, the fascia sign should not extend over the entire shop front.



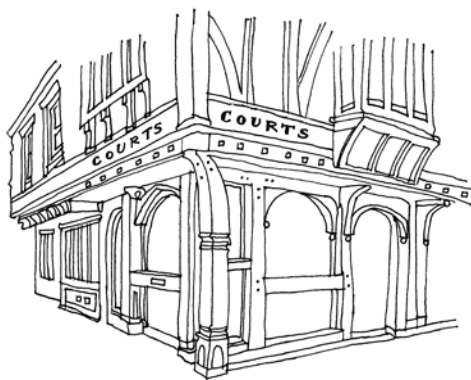
6 Canopies and blinds

- Shops have traditionally used canopies and blinds to protect goods from being damaged by sunlight. If this is necessary, your canopies or blinds should form part of the design of and be a permanent fixture of, the shop front.

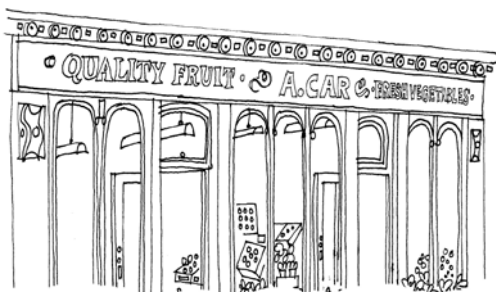
- Canopies and blinds should not be plastic or plastic coated as the reflective surface can detract from the character of the building.



- Well-designed canopies and blinds should be made from canvas or another long-lasting, non-reflective material and be able to be opened and closed.



- The style and size of lettering on your fascia sign can have a significant effect on the overall design of the shop front. The typeface should fit the style of the building and shop front, and be clear and easy to read. For your fascia sign to be well-balanced, the lettering on it should not be more than two thirds of the depth of the sign. We encourage traditional hand-painted letters on a timber board, particularly for older buildings.



- It is not always necessary to have your fascia sign lit up. However, if this is necessary, your sign should be lit up by spotlights pointing down or strip lighting concealed above the sign. We do not allow box fascia signs that are lit up from the inside or light fittings which are too large or stick out too far and so appear clumsy and detract from the shop front.

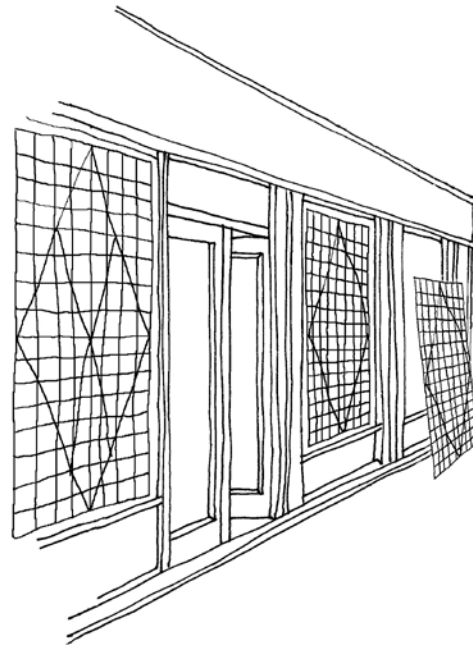


7 Security

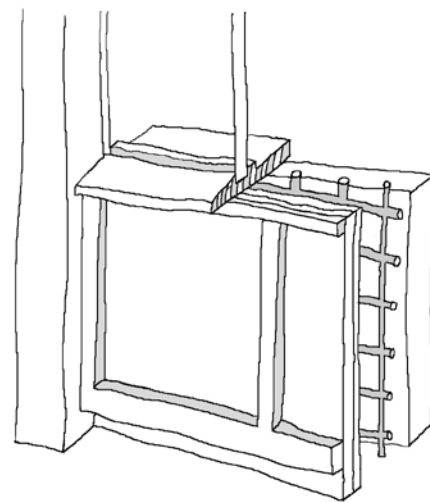
- a) Unfortunately, it is now necessary to incorporate shop security into the design of shop fronts. However, we must make sure that steps to combat crime are not carried out at the expense of the appearance of the shop front or the street scene. It is possible to design shop fronts that are both secure and attractive, as long as security measures are considered while the shop front is being designed.

Security shutters

- b) Many now think that security shutters are vital, but they often overlook the effect unsympathetic security shutters have on the local environment. Solid, unpainted shutters on the outside of shops can create an intimidating street scene and increase the fear of crime. However, a thoughtful design can include security shutters without destroying the visual character of the shop front.
- Any shutters should be fitted inside your shop to reduce their effect on your shop's appearance. Open-lattice shutters provide a view into the shop and allow light to be cast onto the street to deter thieves. These shutters, when combined with strengthened or laminated glass, provide excellent protection



- An alternative to shutters are removable wrought-iron bars, on the inside or outside of the shop window. The design and colour of the bars could reflect the style of the shop. Another option is simply to use strengthened or laminated glass.



- We will allow shutters to be outside shops only in exceptional circumstances. In these cases, the shutter box should be fitted behind the fascia sign and divided between windows and doors (rather than covering the whole shop front) with the guide rails recessed within doorways and window openings. As with shutters fitted inside, they should be painted, open lattice-work. We will allow solid or perforated shutters only if you can prove that there are exceptional circumstances.

- Alarm boxes need to be seen, but not be too obtrusive. They can be recessed into the panels of the shop front.



8 Conservation Areas and listed buildings

- a) The special character of a number of Areas within Sefton (such as Lord Street, Southport and Birkdale Village) need special consideration when shop fronts are being designed, or when security measures and signs are being added. Our recommendations in these areas are mainly the same as the rest of the borough, with the following differences.

Shop fronts

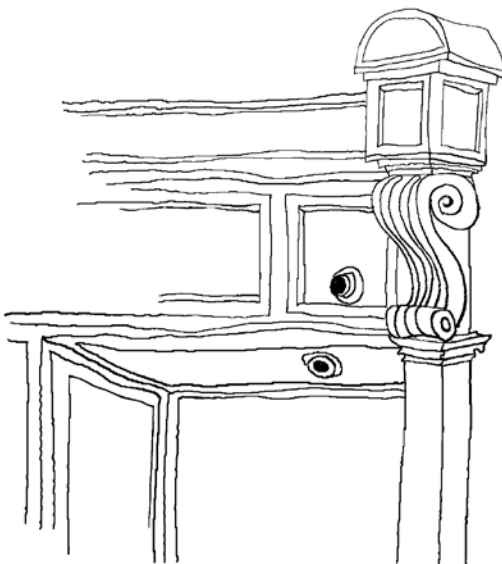
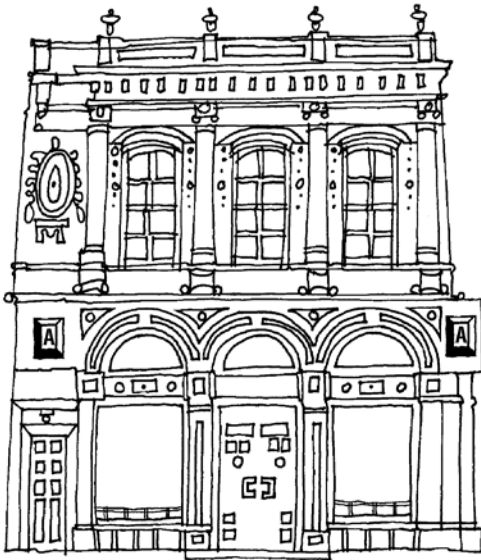
- Unlike in other parts of the borough, there is less flexibility in the styles of shop fronts we will allow. You must keep and restore any historical or period details, and incorporate them into the new design.
- If your shop has previously been extensively altered, or had alterations that do not fit in with the building's character, we will only allow changes that fit in with the character of the Conservation Area.
- The materials you use should match the originals (if these are still available) and the colour should match the character of the overall area.

Security

- We will not allow security shutters fitted outside your shop.
- We will not allow solid or perforated shutters, whether painted or unpainted.
- If you need to add security measures, these should fit in with the design of other existing shop fronts.

Signs

- Signs on your shop front must show only the name and type of your business.
- We do not allow signs above the gutter level of verandahs or the sill of first-floor windows. We will allow gold-leaf lettering painted on upper-floor windows.





- Signs on verandahs or canopies must form part of your shop front's design and must not conflict with the appearance of neighbouring verandahs.
- We will not allow box signs that are lit up from the inside. If necessary, signs should be lit up by spotlights pointing down.
- We must agree the colour, size and typeface of any sign.

9 Permission needed to alter shop fronts

The type of permission you need depends on the type of alteration you want to carry out and where your shop is.

Consent Type	Where Required
Planning permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need this to replace an existing shop front with one which is significantly different from the original.
Conservation Area consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need this to demolish any property within a Conservation Area.
Advertisement consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For detailed information on this type of permission application and when it is needed see, 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers' which is available from us.
Listed building consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need this for a new shop front, and sometimes for new signs or minor alterations on, listed buildings.
Building Regulations approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You need this for all work which alters the shop's structure, changes its fire escape, or would make access difficult for those with disabilities.

10 Applying for permission

When you are applying for planning permission it is a good idea to employ a qualified designer such as an architect or a building surveyor to help with the design. Your application should include the following.

- Three copies of a filled-in application form.
- A certificate of ownership.
- Three copies of a site plan (scale 1:1250) with your shop outlined in red.
- Three copies of metric-scaled plans showing your proposed sign including lights. A suitable scale would be 1:500.
- Three copies of each front, rear and side view, to show where on the building signs will go (at a scale of 1:100 or 1:200). The whole building, not just the ground floor, should be shown. You may include photos to support your application, particularly to show the existing shop front.
- Three copies of a cross section drawing of each advert.
- Full details of lighting, materials, colours and fixings to be used.

11 Further advice and guidance

The following documents provide more guidance:

- PPG 19: Outdoor advertisement control, March 1992.
- Outdoor advertisements and signs: A guide for advertisers, 1995.
- Planning and access for disabled people: A good practice guide, March 2003.

These documents are available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website: www.odpm.gov.uk



12 Useful contacts

Planning & Economic Regeneration Department (for Bootle, Waterloo, Crosby, Hightown, Maghull and Melling):

Planning & Economic Regeneration Department
Development Control
Balliol House,
Balliol Road
Bootle
L20 3RY

Phone: 0151 934 3572
Fax: 0151 934 3587
E-mail: planning.department@planning.sefton.gov.uk

Planning and Economic Regeneration Department
Department (for Southport, Formby and Ince Blundell):

Planning and Economic Regeneration Department,
Development Control North
9/11 Eastbank Street
Southport
PR8 1DL

Phone 0151 934 2206
Fax: 0151 934 2213
E-mail: planning.dcnorth@planning.sefton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

Statement of public consultation

- a) The Planning Committee approved a draft 'Shop fronts security and signage' supplementary planning guidance note for feedback and to help it make decisions about planning applications on 15 January 2003. It was placed on our website later that year.
- b) We consulted interested organisations in July 2003. In total, we sent over 600 letters to local agents, developers, housebuilders and other interested groups (such as parish councils). We then consulted with the general public in September and October 2003. We placed adverts in the local press and the guidance was available in the two planning offices and at four main public libraries (the main library at Bootle was closed for repair in 2003).
- c) Our consultation procedure is in line with Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 'Development Plans' (PPG12) which stresses the importance of consulting widely if we and the Secretary of State are to rely on Supplementary planning guidance notes to help make decisions about planning applications.
- d) We did not receive any comments about the guidance note. However, Formby Civic Society wrote to support all of the SPGs.
- e) We consulted Plain English Campaign on the guidance to help make its wording clearer.
- f) We revised the guidance note to take account of changes proposed to the draft plan, to correct mistakes in the guidance and to make the wording clearer in line with Plain English Campaign's suggestions.
- g) We reported the results of the consultation process to the Planning Committee on 19 November 2003. The 'Shop fronts security and signage Supplementary Planning Guidance note was adopted on 19 November 2003.



