

THE CARADON *DESIGN* GUIDE

SECTION G

S H O P F R O N T S



Supplementary Planning Guidance

July 2000

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A new corner shop front in Liskeard, designed with traditional elements. The use of good quality sign writing and an interesting colour scheme completes the whole effect.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Caradon District Council has produced the Design Guide to help conserve and strengthen the special character of the built environment in Cornwall, especially its traditional towns and villages. This section is concerned with shop fronts and signs. Other sections of the Design Guide will provide valuable background information.

- Section A* Explores the concept of local distinctiveness.
- Section B* Provides information on design within the Planning System.
- Section E* The factsheets will provide further information on building details and materials.

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The District retains many excellent and well preserved original shop fronts, mainly from the nineteenth century, which add to the areas' character and atmosphere. However, these are frequently replaced with modern shop fronts, which often lack quality and dilute local identity.

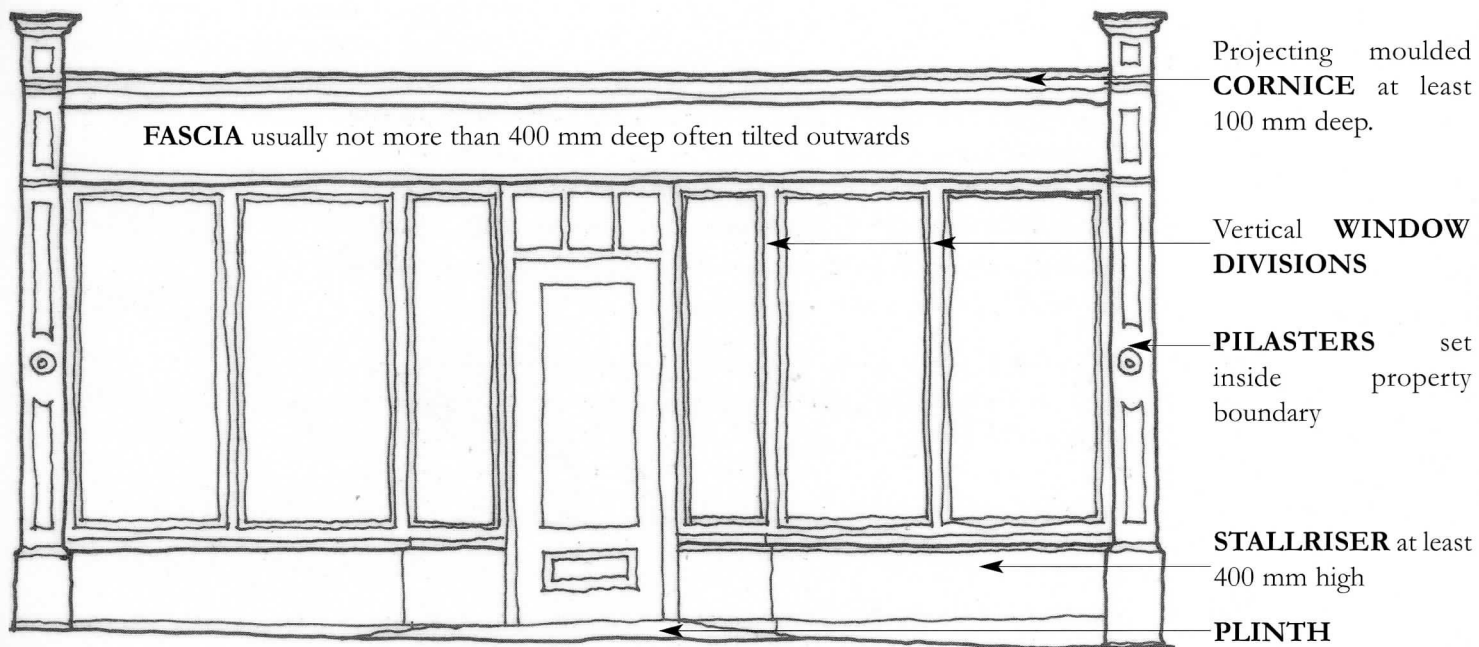
The Council aims to conserve all original shop fronts, within Conservation Areas, and will expect replacement shop fronts, in existing shopping streets, to be based on traditional designs and to use traditional materials.

EXISTING SHOP FRONTS

Retain and repair existing period shop fronts wherever possible. Older timber is usually of lasting quality, and repair by a skilled joiner can often cost less than replacements.

REPLACEMENT SHOP FRONTS

The best traditional shop fronts are made of high quality joinery with careful attention to detail and often with elaborate decorative features. Carefully detailed replicas of traditional shop fronts will be encouraged where they relate to the style and age of the original building and contribute to the wider street scene.



DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Fascias

- The fascia board should generally be no deeper than 400mm, and should be kept well below the level of upper floor windows. It should also be positioned to avoid covering up any original architectural details. Over-large fascia boards should be avoided.
- The fascia should always be finished at the top with a projecting moulded cornice or capping. This is the traditional way of completing the top of the shop front and provides a proper architectural division and visual support for the upper floors of the building.

Stallrisers

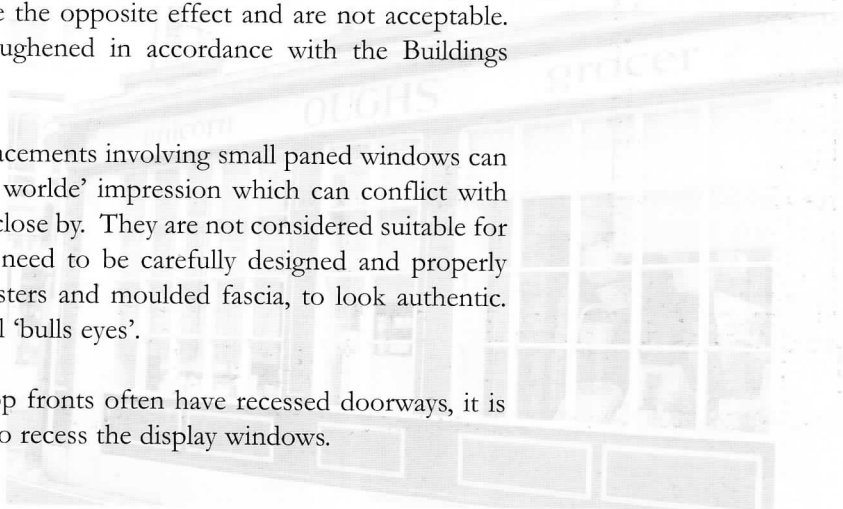
- Windows down to pavement level are not acceptable, and a stallriser of at least 400mm should be provided beneath the window sill. Depending on the existing building, suitable materials may be painted render, granite or panelled timber.

Pilasters

- These provide a side framing for the shop front and visual support for the fascia. They should usually be positioned at least 100mm inside the property boundary to allow space for rainwater pipes and maintenance.

Shop Windows

- Glazing bars or mullions are essential to create vertical sub-divisions in display windows. They give added visual support to the building and reflect the proportions of upper floor windows. Large undivided areas of plate glass have the opposite effect and are not acceptable. All glazing must be toughened in accordance with the Buildings Regulations.
- Modern shop front replacements involving small paned windows can create an artificial 'olde worlde' impression which can conflict with genuine period features close by. They are not considered suitable for large display areas, and need to be carefully designed and properly framed with plinth, pilasters and moulded fascia, to look authentic. Avoid the use of artificial 'bulls eyes'.
- Although traditional shop fronts often have recessed doorways, it is not usually appropriate to recess the display windows.



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Access

- Access for the disabled should be provided in accordance with the Building Regulations and take account of the width of electric wheelchairs.

Materials and Construction

- The materials used for the new shop front should be consistent with the original building.
- These materials are *not* recommended for older buildings:

Aluminium or stainless steel
Mosaic, glazed tiles or terrazzo
Glossy Perspex, GRP or plastic laminates.

- Varnished or stained hardwood has recently been fashionable for replacement shop fronts. But these tend to stand out as obviously modern and are not considered suitable for historic or listed buildings. In addition the use of tropical or indigenous hardwood should be avoided for ecological and sustainability reasons.
- Painted timber is the recommended material for the main framework of new and replacement shop fronts. But it needs to be designed with good quality in mind and manufactured by a skilled joiner who has experience of traditional methods.

Frontage Width

- In order to preserve the existing scale and pattern of shopping streets, the Council will not usually accept the combination of two or more properties into one larger unit. Where this is acceptable in principle, the developer must ensure that the frontages are not amalgamated, and that any interior work also respects the historic character of each building.



The cast iron detail on this Victorian shop front and the mosaic tiled door step are full of character, and add to the overall streetscape.



Retain old features of interest. Such as this stained glass in a shop front in Liskeard.



A simple small shop front with good quality sign writing.

Blinds and Canopies

The District Council will not normally accept new awnings or canopies, but may give permission where the building and location is suitable. New awnings must be of traditional design, fully retracting and in subdued colours. There is a legal requirement that all shop blinds and canopies should be a minimum of 2.4m in height above the highway. Any lettering must be well designed and of subtle character. Modern glossy PVC canopies look out of place in any historic setting and are not acceptable in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings, in particular.

Security Shutters

Incorporate security shutters into the design of new shop fronts at the earliest stage to avoid a 'stuck on' appearance.

SIGNS AND ADVERTISING

Competitive advertising leads to signs becoming progressively larger and brasher. This is foreign to the atmosphere of East Cornish towns and totally unnecessary to attract people to shops. Subtlety and restraint promote a restful and prestigious atmosphere.

The Council will seek to eliminate advertising which is strident and will promote discreet and attractive signs.

Mounting of Signs

Other than traditional painted hanging signs, advertising will not usually be permitted above fascia level.

Advertising for upper floor offices should be limited to a single plate at the entrance and lettering applied direct to the window glass.



Avoid obtrusive letter heights and garish colours.



Avoid PVC canopies and signs. Shop front design should be appropriate to its setting and period of property.



A characterful old shop front at Liskeard. note the panels on the stall riser.

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- Advertising will not be permitted on blank side walls or gables unless of exceptional quality.
- There is a legal requirement for signs to be set back a minimum of 0.5m from the edge of the carriageway.

■ Illumination

- The Council accepts external lighting of traditional painted signs, provided that the level of lighting is not excessive, and the fittings unobtrusive and of good quality.

■ Projecting Signs

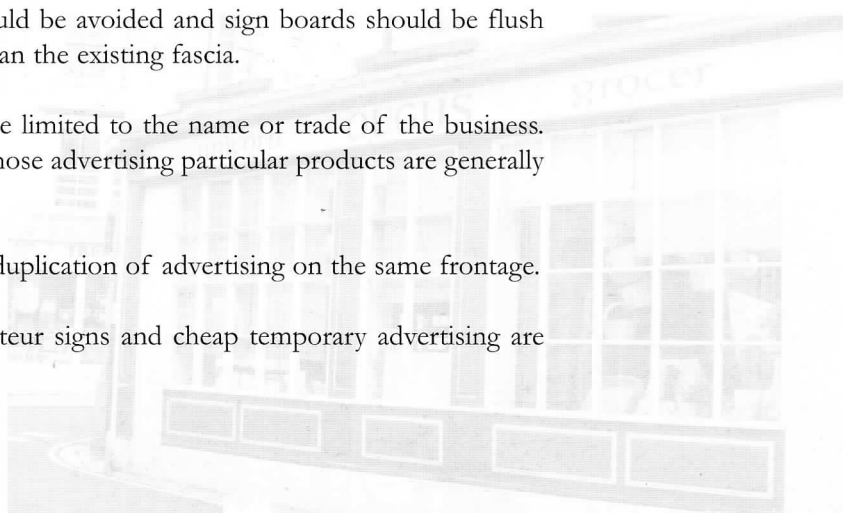
- Traditional painted hanging signs on simple and unobtrusive brackets will be encouraged where they replace a larger sign. Other forms of projecting sign will not be permitted.



A well designed projecting hanging sign.

■ Size and Content

- Over-large signs should be avoided and sign boards should be flush with and no larger than the existing fascia.
- Advertising should be limited to the name or trade of the business. Sponsored signs or those advertising particular products are generally not acceptable.
- There should be no duplication of advertising on the same frontage.
- Poorly executed amateur signs and cheap temporary advertising are not acceptable.





Lettering Height

- Lettering height should be restricted to 225mm . In narrow streets considerably smaller lettering will be more suitable and readable.

Materials

- Perspex or plastic signs should be avoided. Individual cut-out perspex or metal letters are very suitable for mounting direct to a wall or fascias. Painted timber signs are generally recommended.

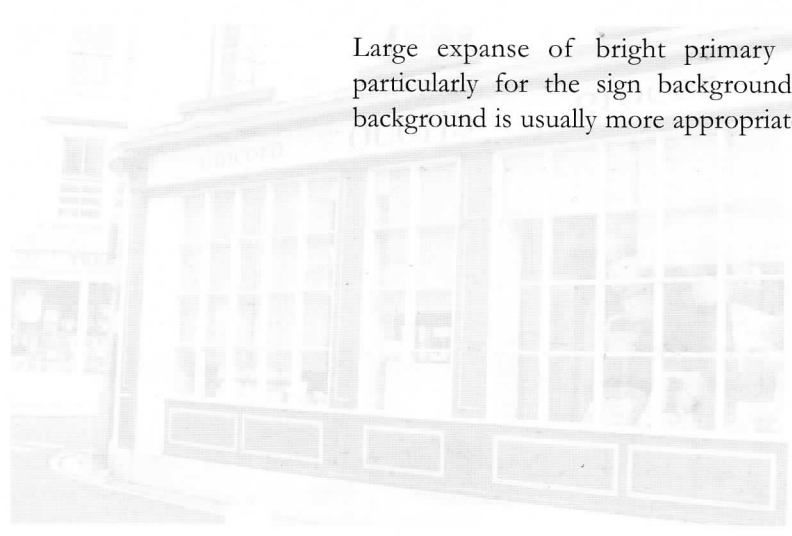
House Styles

- Many large commercial firms have adapted their standard signs to suit local circumstances and have been surprised at the extent of local approval.
- The District Council will expect standard house styles to be modified where these conflict with the guidelines, especially in AONBs, Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.

Colour

- It is best to take account of the colour scheme of the whole building when deciding on sign colours. Black and white schemes are particularly effective as they cannot clash with neighbouring properties.

Large expanse of bright primary colours should be avoided, particularly for the sign background. Light lettering on a dark background is usually more appropriate.

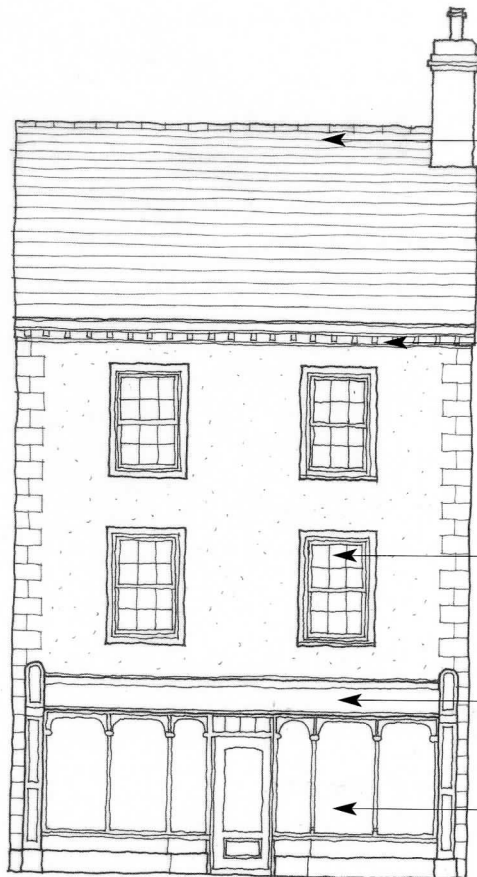


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POOR AND GOOD PRACTICE



- Chimney stack demolished.
- Neglected, leaking roof will cause serious future decay.
- Inappropriate dormer.
- Removal of historic detail detrimental to value of the building and townscape interest.
- Inappropriate replacement window design.
- Poor maintenance.
- Overlarge fascia with poor graphic design and advertising above fascia level.
- Brush advertising.
- Large areas of glass which provides no visual support to the upper floors.



- Roof kept in good repair protects the rest of the structure.
- Careful repair, or like-for-like replacement of original details and components, conserves the original character.
- Vertical window divisions
- Well designed and discreet advertising.
- Traditional shop front is in keeping with the building and the street.