

# The Design of Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements



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Acknowledge is given to South Somerset District Council for their agreement to use the illustration reproduced in this document.

## **SUMMARY:**

This design guidance has been prepared to support the policy contained in the adopted Mid Devon Local Plan and, having been subject to consultation, carries the status of the supplementary planning guidance (SPD). It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework produced by Mid Devon District Council.

The principles set out in this booklet apply throughout the district but it is not intended that they should be treated as blueprints. The advice offered in this guidance is to help towards achieving successful designs and each proposal will be judged on its own merits. Good contemporary designs which are appropriate and relate well to their surroundings are as likely to be supported as traditional designs.

All applications for planning permission, listed building consent and advertisement consent will be judged in the context of statutory duties, National Planning Guidance and the Adopted Local Plan.

This document is set out in two parts. The first is a guide to a successful refurbishment or alteration to an existing shopfront, or complete replacement of a shopfront, or a brand new shopfront. The second sets out the permissions/consents that may be required and the context in which those decisions are made.

## **INTRODUCTION :**

Shopfronts and their associated signs and advertisements play a very important part in the appearance of the commercial areas of our towns. Most of the buildings in these areas contain a shopfront on the ground floor which is the principal focus of attention and falls in the direct line of sight for people in the street. A shopfront is designed to attract attention but its effectiveness depends on the quality of its design and the display within its windows.

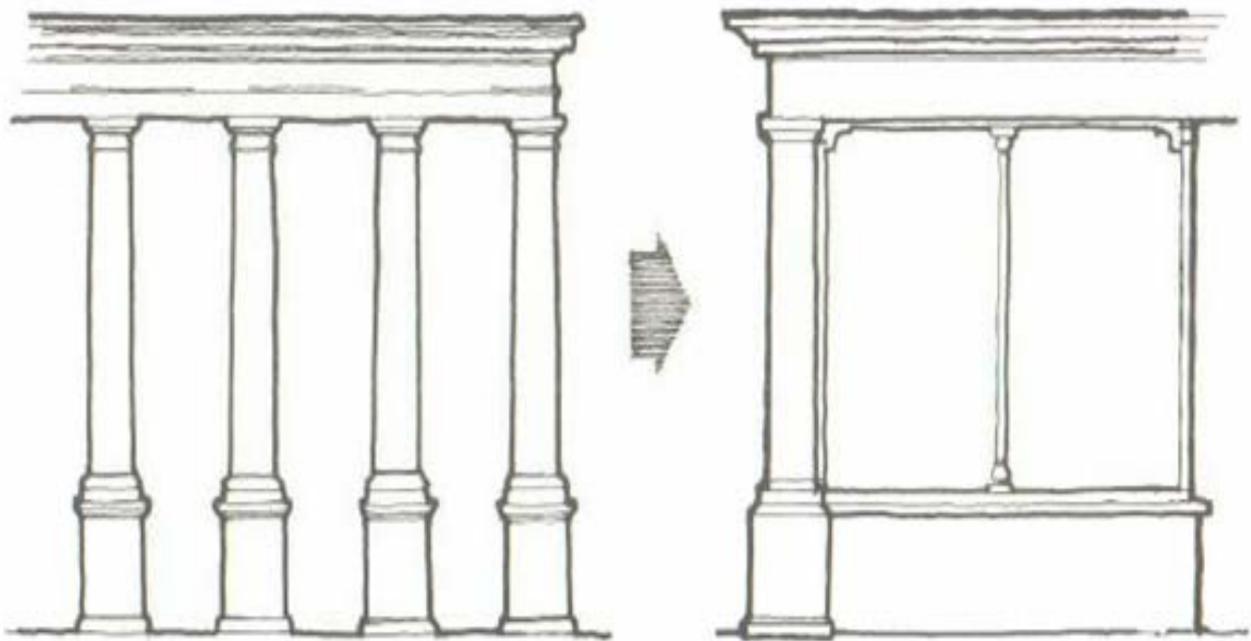
The surrounds to the shop windows containing a display act as a visual frame and set off the display in a similar way a picture frame enhances a picture. Just as an unframed picture often has less impact than a framed one, the impact of sale to the display can be enhanced by its setting with an attractive shopfront. Poor quality badly proportioned and discordant design shopfronts will let down the display and project a poor image for the shop.

# PART 1: GUIDANCE ON NEW, REFURBISHED AND ALTERATIONS SHOPFRONTS AND THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS

## HISTORIC PRINCIPLES

The concept of the shopfront as we know it today evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century using classical architecture principles in fashion at the time. This proved to be successful in achieving a satisfactory relationship between the shopfront of the building as a whole. The various classical elements were used in a variety of ways to convey a frame for the window display and to emphasise the entrance to the shop. Since that time the same ideas proportion and balance based on classical orders have been used in countless adaptations and continue to inspire designers today. Whilst this may not be the only way to design the shopfront, many successful contemporary designs have their origin in the same principles.

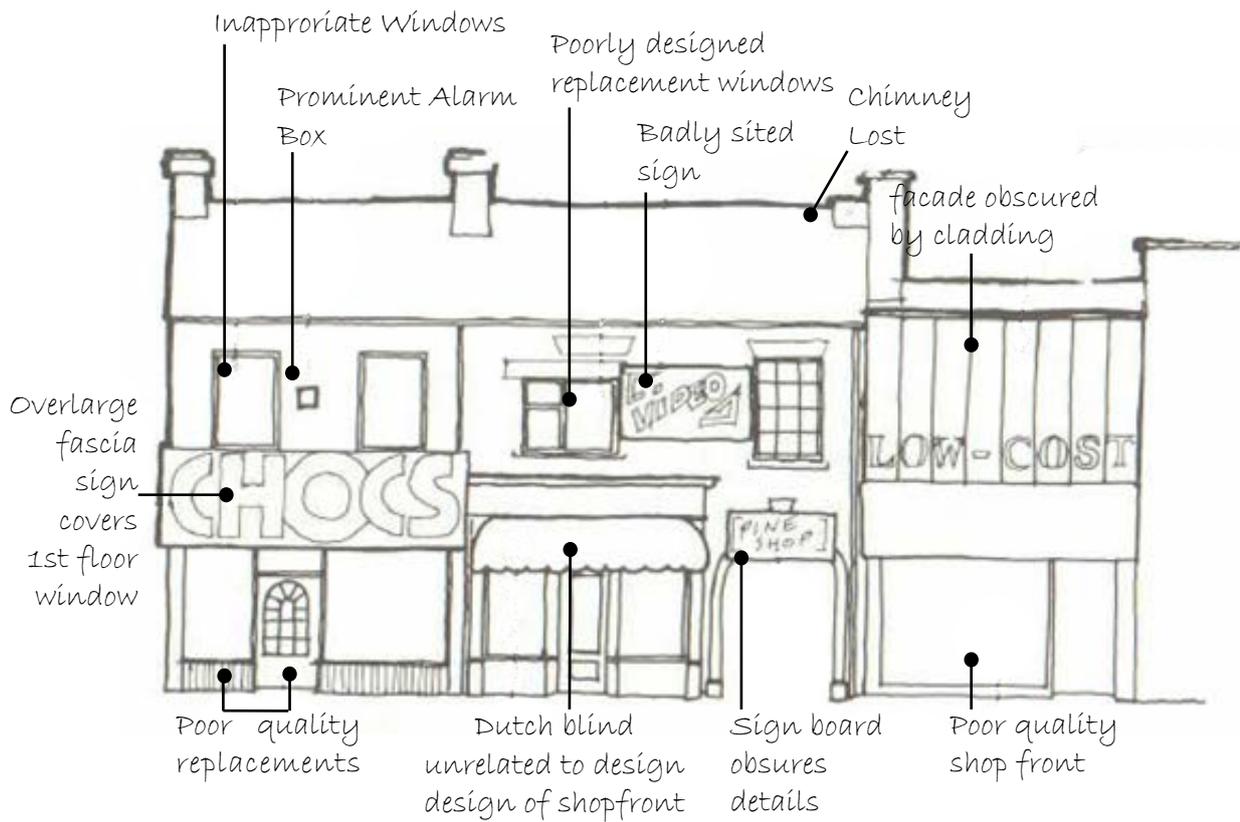
*Classical Principles Adapted To Shopfront Design*



*Distinctive 20th century designs should be retained:  
They add to the diversity and interest of a street...*

The principle of providing a visual frame is also important architecturally for the appearance of the whole building frontage. The upper part of the building needs to appear to be supported at ground level. The shopfront 'frame' where appropriately designed acts to do this.

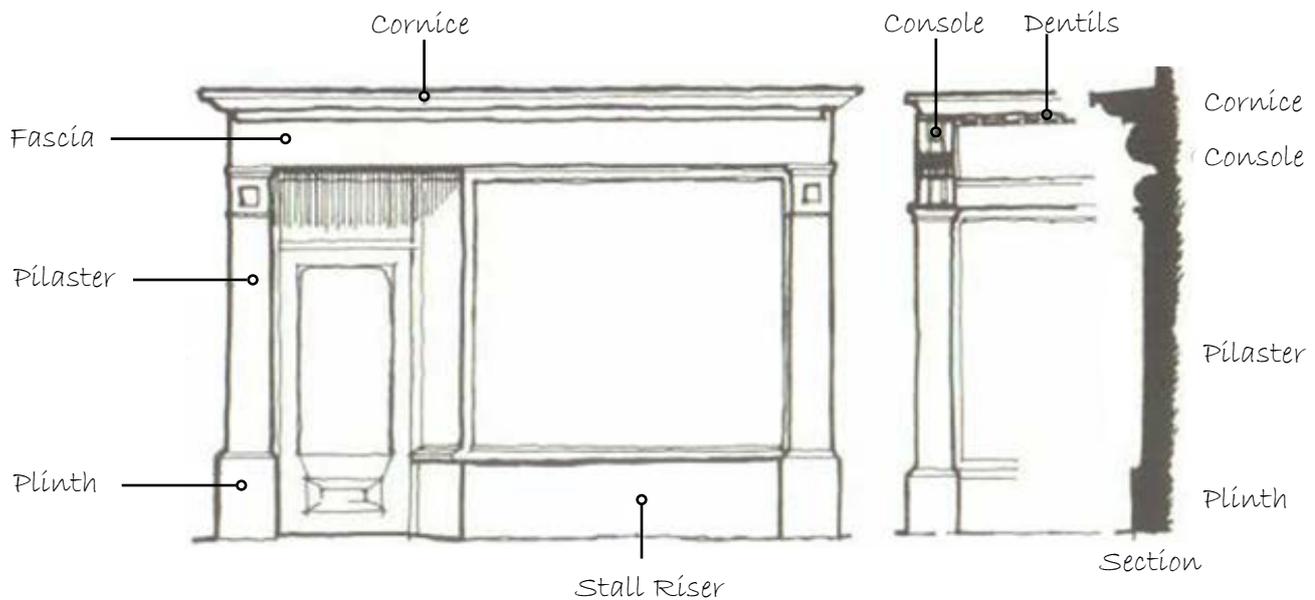
Many Streets are made up of well-proportioned older buildings whose character has been eroded by badly-designed alterations



Good design and careful attention to detail can improve appearance and add to a shopping streets sense of quality.



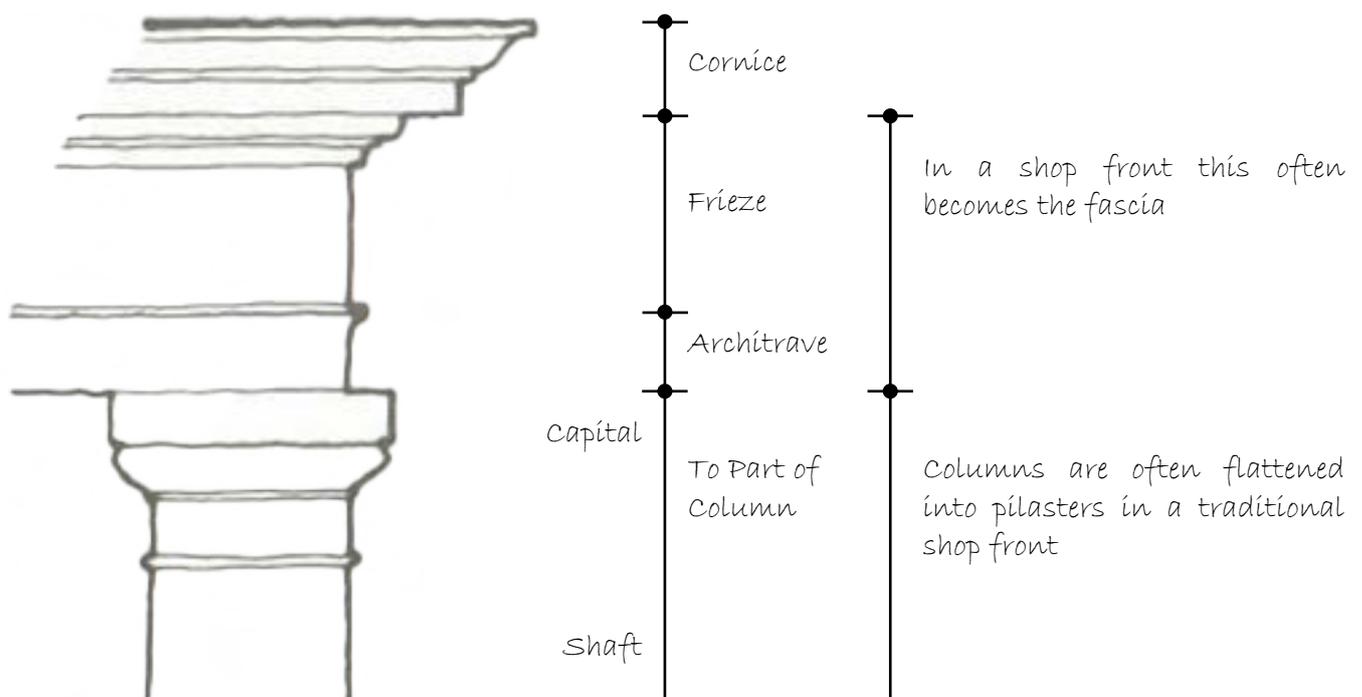
## ELEMENTS OF A SHOPFRONT DESIGN



The visual frame traditionally consists of a **fascia** providing a space for advertising protected from the weather by overhanging **cornice** above and acting visually as the horizontal beam which supports the building above.

The sides of the frame which suggest support for the fascia and cornice are often finished to represent columns either as true freestanding columns or more commonly flat faced **pilasters** whose design is based upon the classical column. Pilasters are used in the design to visually express the structure, to mark the separation of one building from the next and sometimes to emphasize the shop entrance.

The frame is completed by the **stall riser** which provides physical protection at ground level and gives visual weight on to the base of the composition.



## DESIGN OF NEW AND REPLACEMENT SHOPFRONTS

The historic principles can be used today either for the reproduction of a traditional style shopfront for a historic setting or, by creative interpretation, as the basis for a shopfront in a contemporary building.

In all circumstances, a design which demonstrates an understanding of appropriate details and the application of the principles of the portion will be more likely to achieve a satisfactory result.

Remember that the shopfront is subject to close inspection by the public and its detailed appearance is a piece of quality construction needs to be designed with as much care as its general proportions. Carefully considered details and mouldings do not necessarily add much to the cost but can add considerably to an impression of quality.

## EXISTING SHOPFRONTS

A good quality existing shopfront which contributes positively to the character of the building should be retained wherever possible. This is not only applies to older styles; there are good examples of more recent shopfronts which are a familiar part of the local scene and add to richness and variety. Bear in mind it is often cheaper to repair an existing quality shopfront than to replace it. Many shops retain interesting early features of good quality beneath later additions. These may be capable of reuse and form the basis for the refurbishment of an older shopfront.

## THE BUILDING AND ITS SETTING:

The complete frontage represents the public face of the building and forms part of the street scene in its wider context. The design of a shopfront should normally relate to the architectural design of the building into which it is to fit. Its design would seek to unify the whole frontage of that building and avoid a shopfront at ground floor that does not relate to the remainder of the building. In order to avoid incongruous clashes of scale, form or colour the features of the adjacent buildings should normally be taken into account.

## ADVICE ON THE DESIGN OF A NEW SHOPFRONT OR ALTERATION OF AN SHOPFRONT EXISTING

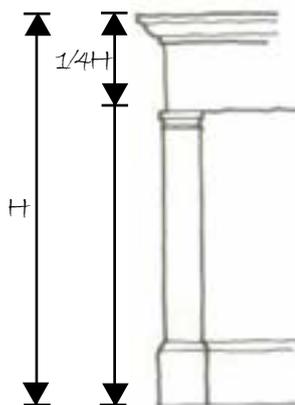


*Avoid fascia signs which are too large for the building...The whole shopfront must relate to the scale and design of the building.*

## Fascias

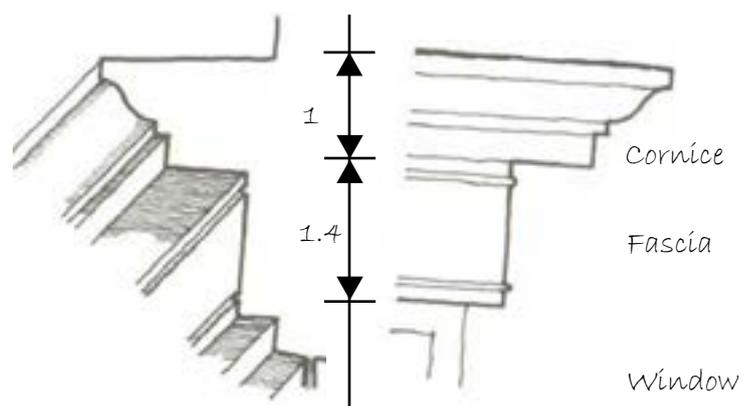
Of all the parts of the shopfront the fascia probably has the greatest effect on the street scene. The fascia functions as part of the frame for the display and to provide a place to advertise the name of the shop. Fascia designs should suit the character of the building as a whole and be in proportion to it.

- New shopfront designs will normally be expected to incorporate a fascia. Unless a high quality unified design for a particular situation can be shown not to require one.
- The boxed out appearance which results from new fascias being applied over existing ones is unsightly, can often appear a clear add on and is undesirable.
- The top of the fascia or cornice should look to be lower than the first floor windowsills and not obstruct other significant elements of the building.
- Traditional fascias are usually no more than 380mm deep. As a guide, the fascia and cornice element of the shopfront should be kept to less than one quarter of the height of the whole shopfront.
- The fascia usually requires a visual 'cap' in the form of a projecting cornice. This will also serve to protect the fascia and the shopfront from weather.
- Avoid the use of sponsored fascia signs advertising other products in addition to the name of the trade or trader.
- Wherever possible avoid use of projecting box fascias, whether internally illuminated or not, particularly in conservation areas and on listed buildings as they are undesirable.
- It is recommended that the individuality of each building be respected by treating each frontage separately, even if internally they are all part of one shop. It is undesirable to carry a fascia across more than one building in an attempt to increase the visual impact of a shop.



The depth of the fascia and cornice should be no more than  $1/4$  the height of the shop front

Typical cornice detail for a small shop front



## Lettering



Avoid loss of identity of individual buildings in a street by amalgamation

Always retain identity of separate elements of a building...

... And the individuality of each separate building...

Fascia lettering is a key component of a design and needs designing and executing carefully as an integrated part of the whole shopfront.

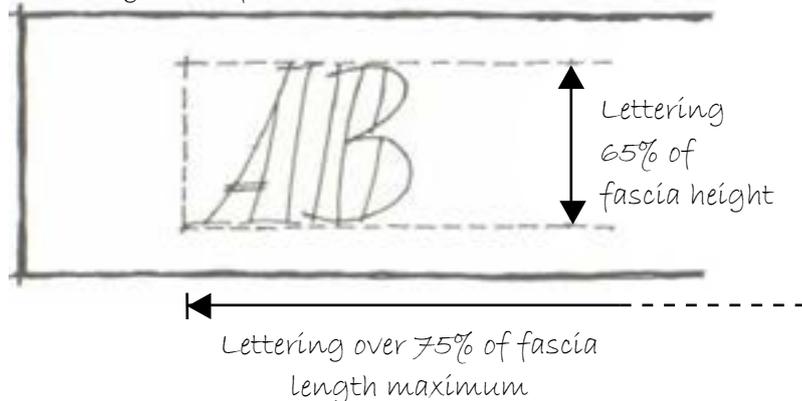
The style of lettering should be selected to suit the nature of the building, content of the wording, the shop itself and its setting.

Lettering should normally be confined to the shop fascia and identify the name of the shop only. Too much lettering and information crowded onto a fascia sign greatly reduces its effectiveness and results in clutter.

Keep lettering in proportion to the length and depth of the fascia. A sufficient margin above and below the actual letters and space on either side are necessary to ensure the visual effectiveness of the sign.

To have visual impact lettering does not need to be enormous. Over large lettering and signs can easily give a shop a poor image and appear overpowering in the street scene.

*Lettering on the fascia*



Take account of the distance in which the sign will be read. There is no point in large lettering if the street is narrow. In practice, normally 150mm high lettering can easily be read at an adequate distance in an average street. Remember, projecting lettering is hard to read at oblique angles and so may not be effective in narrow streets.

Where a shopfront has no fascia the application of individual letters to the wall between ground and first floor level may be appropriate, but will need to take account of any architectural detailing on the building. Lettering or fixing signs above the usual shop fascia level is undesirable, except in the case of some hanging signs.

Where a business is located on an upper floor, traditionally lettering is applied directly to windows, with a simple small sign at the ground floor entrance. Such window lettering is a simply design and would not overcrowd the window area. When designing it is recommended to start with individual letters of 100 mm in height.

## **Letter Techniques**

Hand-painted sign writing on timber fascia is the traditional method of lettering a shopfront, and remains one of the most adaptable and effective. The range of styles is almost unlimited and images of great decorative interest and character can easily be achieved by a competent sign writer.

An alternative, which give a finish very close to hand painting, is the use of applied vinyl lettering. These are so thin that they appear to have been painted onto the fascia.

Gold or light coloured letters on a dark background are effective in all light conditions and particularly suit traditional shopfronts . An image of quality can also be created with profiled wooden or cast brass letters.

Flat plastic cut out letters usually look cheap and undignified and their plain reflective surfaces are not always appropriate.

In conservation areas where the building is listed painted signwriting or applied vinyl lettering will usually be the best solution.

## **House Style and Corporate Image**

Where the context or form and character of an individual building would be otherwise compromised, companies with multiple retail outlets will be asked to adopt a flexible approach to the design of the shopfront and signs.

Imposition of standardised solutions which disregard the context, form and character of the individual building and its setting has resulted in many poor outcome. Almost all house styles can be adapted to suit a particular situation without serious loss of a familiar identity. The general principles for design set out here will provide adequate opportunity for multiples to express their identity while still respecting the design and setting of their shop.

Premises which do not usually require formal window displays such as banks, building societies and betting shops need to be very carefully designed to provide a front with a character that is not blank and hostile. In general, this is best achieved by reducing the glass area and increasing the area of solid framing around it to. The framing will require careful detailing, possibly with paneling or embellishment, if it is to avoid appearing crude and bulky. It is undesirable to simply blank off an existing large area of glass and or apply solid panels behind the glass.

Automatic cash dispensers are to be carefully integrated into the design of the whole front in a discrete and functional way. Prominent surrounds in bright acrylic or with prominent advertising should be avoided.

## Stall Risers

Stall risers are generally incorporated in traditional designs and function both to protect the base of the shopfront and give it visual weight and strength. The use of a stall riser is also an advantage from the point of view of security and physically strengthening the shopfront and reducing the size of the glazed opening.

It is generally recommended that stall risers are incorporated into design of new shop fronts.

The stall riser can be reinforced as a safeguard against ram-raiding.

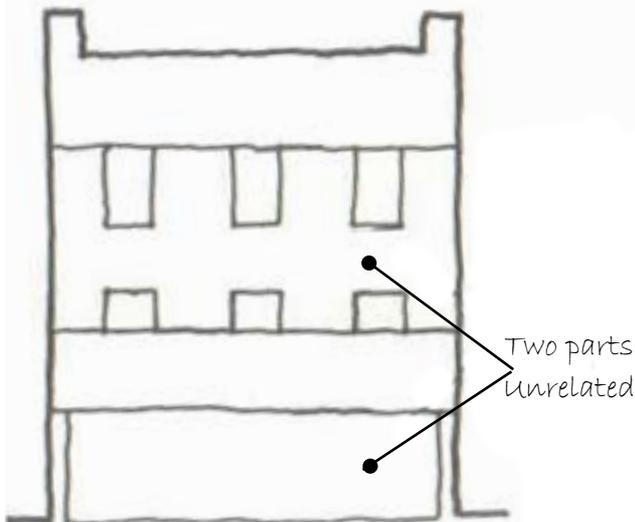
Suitable finish materials are:

- Timber paneling painted
- Ashlar Stone
- Render
- Brick in some situations.

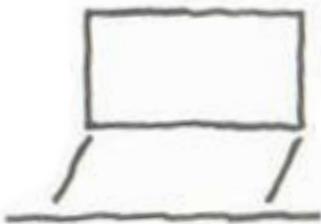
Generally avoid:

- Rubble stone
- Polished stone
- Marbles, granite and other nonlocal stones
- Mosaics, ceramic tiles, acrylic sheet, composite or tongue and groove boards.

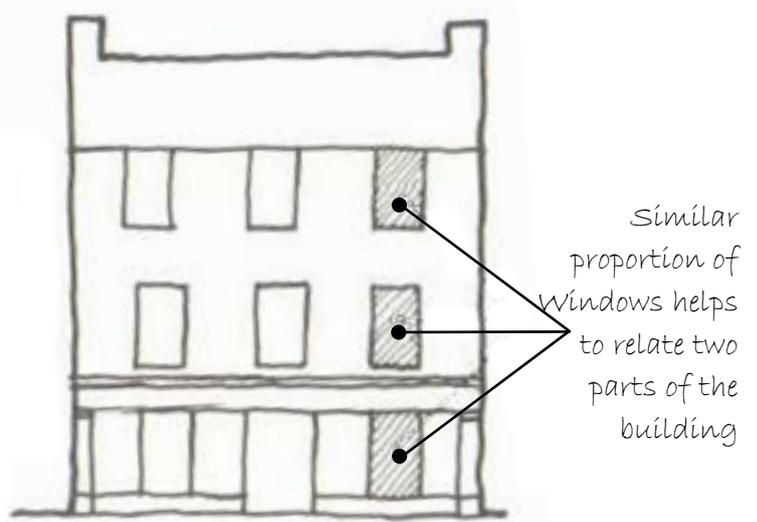
*Design shop fronts with the whole building in mind...*



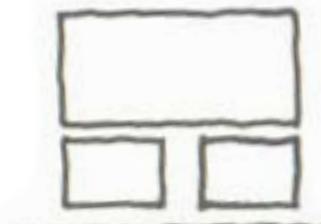
*Visually weak...*



*...Lacks appearance of support and stability...shop front uprights too slender*



*Visually strong...and balanced*



*Appearance of support provided by weight of detail at ground level*

## **Windows and Doors**

Very large areas of glass are best avoided in favour of subdivided areas. Subdivision helps the creation of human scale to the frontage and can be a means of helping the design reflect the rest of the building, give a stronger visual appearance and aid security.

## **MATERIALS FOR SHOPFRONTS**

The selection for materials for the shopfront is to take account the style and design of the proposed front, the building which is to be fitted and its setting.

- Do not use too many different materials in the design.
- It is generally preferable to use non-reflective finishes. Wherever possible avoid the use of plastics, mosaics, polished stone, ceramic tiles, smoked or mirror glass .

### **Timber.**

The traditional material for shopfront. The most versatile and appropriate material for all situations, whether a historic setting, a conservation area, listed building or for contemporary design. Infinite choice available in colour and design.

Should be finished with paint as a general rule. Varnish or stain may be suitable but generally this is not traditional in a conservation areas or for listed building.

Avoid tropical hardwood and all timber from non-sustainable resources.

Timber can normally be inexpensively altered and easily repainted for a fresh look.

### **Stone**

There is very little use of stone for shopfronts in Mid Devon. Where it is used it should be in the form of a smooth ashlar faced stone, not random or rough rubble finishes, unless that suits the context. Only local stone types should be used for preference.

For listed buildings and conservation areas full details of the stone coursing, bedding, jointing, pointing and mortar mix will be required.

### **Brick**

May look out of place unless the building itself is constructed of brick. The type, colour of the bricks and the pointing and bonding of the new brickwork should ideally match the existing.

### **Render**

Only suitable for stall rises or, if executed to the highest possible standard to emulate Ashlar stone. Consider using appropriate self-coloured mix than rather relying on painting with its long-term maintenance commitment .

## **Aluminium**

Much used for modern shopfronts but avoid the use of self-coloured and anodized aluminium wherever possible. Powder coated finishes have a much better appearance and available in a wide range of colours .

Aluminium is not normally suitable for a listed building .

## **Steel**

### **Chrome plate stainless steel and other polished metal .**

Usually too hard and shiny in appearance but can be suited to very specific design solution.

## **Plastics**

Much used for modern signs, fascias and lettering. Care is needed in design selection to avoid thin, harsh, shiny appearance. The detailing of the finish at the end where the sheets may be exposed needs to be considered.

Not usually appropriate in conservation areas or for listed buildings.

## **COLOUR**

Shopfront colour should have regard for the colour qualities of the building as a whole and that of the neighbouring buildings and their setting, in order to avoid clashing contrasts. In a conservation area the characteristic of that conservation area should to be considered.

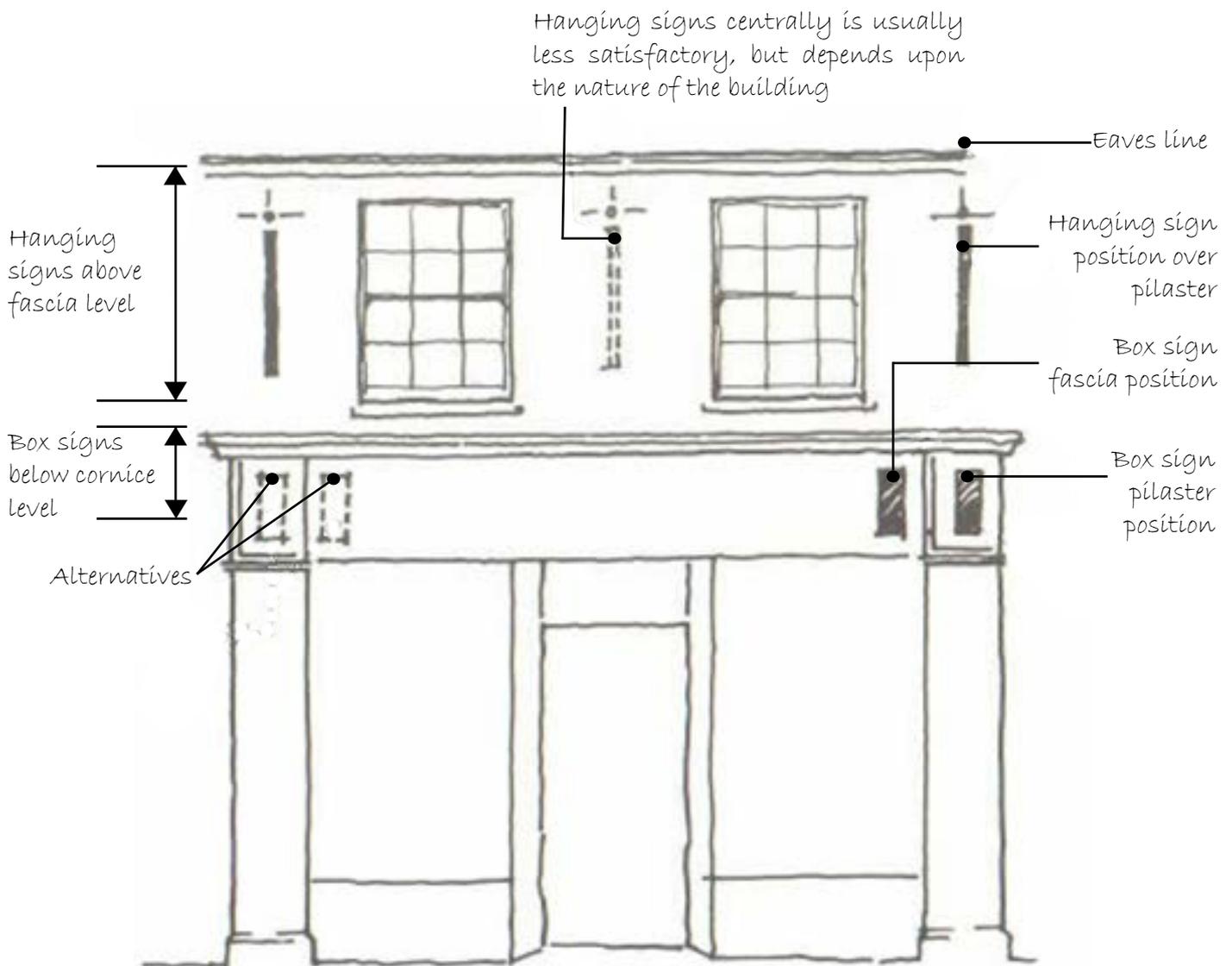
The local distinctiveness of a place is partly determined by its colours; the colours of the surrounding landscape, the colour of local materials and to local traditions of paint colour, all contribute to a sense of place which can be strengthened by continuity of use. Shopfronts can add to this, perhaps by the use of locally distinctive colour or variation of it. In some situations, particularly on a listed building or within a conservation area, some colours may not be appropriate. Corporate colour styles may need to be modified to take this into account. Listed building consent may be needed for repainting of a listed building. Please seek advice.

Selecting colour requires skill and judgement. This is particularly so for strong colours which will selected may add vitality and interest with street, or appear to strident and intrusive if chosen without care.

Dark coloured shopfronts often help to highlight the display area especially if well lit. Fluorescent colours will be out of place almost anywhere.

# PROJECTING SIGNS, CANOPIES AND BLINDS

## Traditional Hanging Signs



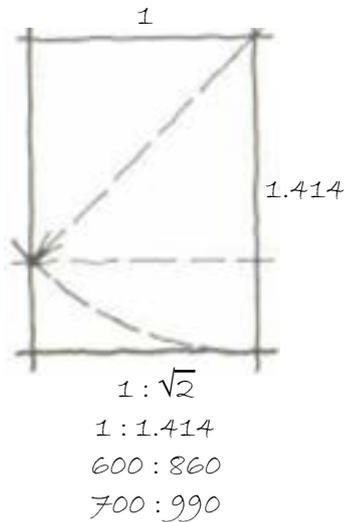
The design of the sign, and of the bracket must must both be of a high quality. The shape of the sign will usually have a vertical emphasis but the use of a symbol rather than a board to note the trade may be appropriate in some cases. They will normally be painted timber with a raised frame to the border, mounted in the form of a free swinging board hanging from a projecting bracket.

Normally only one sign for building will be permitted otherwise the building can become cluttered.

Given the classical rules of proportion and what is pleasing to the eye it is recommended that a starting point for these type of signs is to limit the size to

- 600 mm wide by 860 mm high for two story buildings;
- 700 mm wide by 990 mm height for three story buildings.

its situation, not to be too intrusive or too small to be effective.



Many buildings are designed using one of the rules of proportion evolved to produce harmonious proportions - useful in the design of signs to achieve a satisfying shape.

This is the construction of a rectangle in the proportion  $1:\sqrt{2}$  (A root 2 rectangle) which will produce a well-balanced shape for a sign with a vertical emphasis.

Hanging signs are usually best located to hang above and clear the fascia and cornice, with the bracket mounted between the first floor and ceiling level.

Positions on or near to party walls are usually better than central positions but the nature of the building and its surroundings will be the final determinant.

Internally illuminated hanging signs are not usually acceptable but external illumination may be included provided that it is carefully designed as part of the whole sign. In conservation areas and on listed buildings illumination may not be appropriate at all.

External lights must be arranged to avoid danger of dazzling passers-by and drivers of vehicles and shining into neighbours windows.

### **Projecting Box Signs**

As signs are judged on context and given the policy and statutory position outlined later it is unlikely that projecting box signs will be permitted in conservation areas or on listed buildings whether internally illuminated or not. Hanging signs are the preference in this context.

In order to sit properly with the shop front in context, projecting box signs should normally be located no higher than the top of the cornice or fascia and it is recommended that a starting point for these type of signs is to limit the size to

- 900 mm projection by 300 mm deep
- 750 mm projection by 375 mm deep or
- A size between these dimensions.

### **Canopies and Blinds**

Canopies and blinds act to provide shelter and protect the shop display from damage by sunshine. This is their main function and it is undesirable to introduce a blind as a form of advertising space. Ideally they should always be functional and retractable.

Premises which face north or are situated in very narrow streets normally have no need for blinds. Occasionally a canopy may be required to offer a shelter to goods displayed on a private forecourt, but it should also be retractable.

Design for the housing for the retractable blind traditionally forms an integrated part of the shopfront fascia. This way the blind will relate to the form of the shopfront, and does not look like an add on and out of place. Dutch blinds are rarely appropriate since their form when open and the shape of the housing is unlikely to relate well to an existing shopfront.

It is recommended that materials for blinds should be non reflective. Wet look material, shiny plastics, garish or fluorescent colours are unsuitable as additions to almost any shopfront.

## **HIGHWAY SAFETY**

Signs and canopies which extend of the public highway will be subject to the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

This states in section 1 that where signs are erected above footways and cycle tracks, adequate clearance must be allowed for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. Interim Advice Note 195/16 'Cycle Traffic and the Strategic Road Network' requires a minimum height for such structures of 2300 mm for pedestrians and 2400 mm for cyclists. However, to minimise the environmental impact of signs, particularly large directional signs, consideration should be given to adopting lower mounting heights. A minimum clearance of 2100 mm should be maintained over footways, 2300 mm over cycle tracks or shared-use facilities and 2700 mm over equestrian routes.

## **ILLUMINATION**

Generally it is preferable to illuminate the display rather than the shopfront itself but it is accepted the illumination of signs and fascias will be appropriate in some situations.

In conservation areas and for listed buildings, illuminated signs will usually only be considered for premises which open during the evenings. Lighting must be carefully and unobtrusively designed to respect the building and be appropriate to the area.

Internally illuminated fascia signs can be visually overpowering in the street scene and project a poor image. They should only be used if strictly limited to the fascia located as an integral part of the actual shopfront. It is highly undesirable to spread it across the whole frontage of the building in an uncontained manner. Careful attention to the edges of these signs is essential to avoid the sign projecting in a bulky manner and that the ends of the sign are finished properly to avoid a cheap and crude appearance.

Internally illuminated facsias will not be normally be permitted in conservation areas or on listed building.

Individual letters, halo illuminated or internally lit, are often be a better design solution for internal illumination but can be bulky brash and difficult to read from the side. A flat fascia sign is often easier to read and, well designed can give a better image.

## ACCESS

New shopfronts should always accommodate the needs of disabled people. Wherever possible steps should be avoided and doors arranged to be both wide enough, and capable of, being opened by people in wheelchairs.

Ramps should not be steeper than 1:12. Small changes in level may be possible within the footway outside the shop. Consult the Highway Authority for the area. Doors should provide a clear opening width of 850mm and door handles should be located to suit people in wheelchairs.

Glass doors with extensive areas of glazing can cause difficulty for the partially sighted. The inclusion of stall rises to the shopfront, glazing bars and subdivision can make the shopfront more legible.

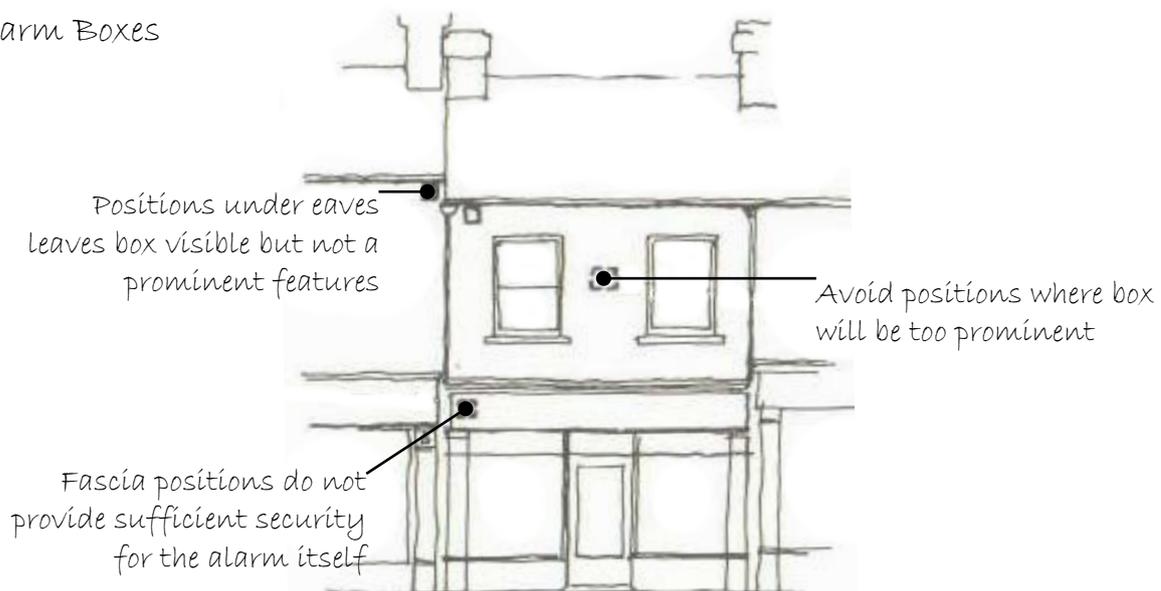
## SECURITY

Security measures should always be appropriate to the likely risk. Before deciding upon any one measure it is advisable to consider the security of the building as a whole taking advice from the police and insurance company. In many instances break-ins take place at the rear of the premises where the fronts are more often at risk from casual vandalism.

Visible and illuminated shop window displays contribute significantly to the general attractiveness of the street and the after hours window shopping. Maintaining internally illuminated displays both in the windows and within the shop will add to light levels in the street after dark acting as an additional measure of security as well as enabling police supervision of the interior of the premises. Therefore measures which do not obscure the window displays are preferred

The character and appearance of existing shopfronts can be radically altered by the addition of external shutters, box housings, guide tracks, locking devices, security cameras etc. Such alterations can have a detrimental effect upon the character of a whole street or area especially when several shopfronts situated close together are affected. Out of shopping hours, a close shuttered shopping street will present a drab, lifeless and even hostile atmosphere which, whilst offering a degree of security to the individual shop premises, is not in the best interest of the areas image. There is a need for balance between the provision of adequate security and the maintenance of the quality of the environment of shopping areas.

### *Siting Alarm Boxes*



All proposals will be considered on merit taking into account the need for security, the likely effect upon the shopfront and the building itself, the adjacent buildings and the locality or street scene

Planning permission or listed building consent may be granted on a personal or temporary basis in order to avoid certain security measures which may be needed for a particular business being retained when no longer required.

## **PART 2: NEED FOR PERMISSION AND POLICY/STATUTORY CONTEXT**

### **IS AN APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION/LISTED BUILDING CONSENT NECESSARY?**

The installation of a new shopfront or the alteration of an existing shopfront is development which requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

In addition other permissions may be required:

- Advertisements and signs are controlled by the Control of Advertisements Regulations. Not all new signs need a specific consent. Please obtain advice on the need for consent from the planning office before proceeding. See <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/duty-planning-services/>
- Listed Building consent will usually be needed to alter a shopfront or change the signage, and in some cases to change the colour if the building is listed. Please obtain advice on the need for consent from the conservation officer before proceeding. See <https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/conservation/conservation-services/>

### **PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSION**

Mid Devon Council welcomes and encourages discussions at an early stage before you make your planning and/or listed building application. There is a cost for this service.

Spending time and effort in preparing a proposal is more likely to result in a good quality and acceptable development and also helps us process your application more quickly. Experience has shown that pre-application advice can save time, costs and frustration and optimise the potential of a site

Advice on the Council's planning pre-application advice service can be found on the mid Devon Council website or by following these links

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/apply-for-permission/pre-application-advice/>

### **APPLICATIONS FOR PERMISSION/CONSENT**

What information will be required?

Planning applications for new shopfront or advertisement consent for signage should ideally include:

- Fully detailed plans and for elevational drawings of the whole building frontage, showing the new shopfront to a recognized metric scale ideally no smaller than 1:50.
- Full details of all materials proposed.

In conservation areas or where the building is listed, this information should ideally be supplemented by:

- Elevational drawings showing the complete neighbouring buildings in relation to the proposal no smaller than a scale of 1:50.

- A detailed elevation of proposed shopfront to a scale of no smaller than 1:20.
- Full coverage of details including sections of cornices, fascia, blind boxes, window frames and glazing bars, stall riser, doors and pilasters at a scale 1:20 but ideally at 1:5 or 1:10.
- Full details of all materials and colours proposed.

Further advice can be found at

<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/planning/apply-for-permission/>

## **CONTEXT FOR DECISION MAKING**

### **LOCAL PLAN**

Applications for development must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material consideration indicate otherwise as required by section 38(6) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

The Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 was adopted on July 29<sup>th</sup> 2020 following the publishing of the Inspectors Report which concluded that the Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 provides an appropriate basis for the Planning of the District, provided that a number of main modifications (MMs), are made to it to make the Plan sound and capable of adoption.

The Mid Devon Local Plan 2013-2033 will guide development in the district over a 20 year period and aims to ensure that new homes, jobs and services needed by communities are located in the most sustainable places. It will also help deliver the infrastructure, facilities and other developments needed to make this possible.

Policies within the Adopted Local Plan that are relevant to this SPD are

- DM1 – High Quality Design
- DM16 - Fronts of shops and business premises
- DM17 - Rural shopping
- DM25 - Development affecting heritage assets

These policies can be found in full on the Council's website in the section that relates to the Local Plan.

## **CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS**

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character should be preserved or enhanced. There are over 50 conservation areas in Mid Devon and many contain shopfronts including legacy shopfronts no longer in commercial use or an entire shopping area.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 gives a general duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions. The Local Planning Authority is required, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, to give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

A listed building is a building which is included in the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. Specific consent known as listed building consent is required for any work of alteration or demolition. It is in a criminal offence to carry out such works without consent. There are over 2500 Listed Buildings in Mid Devon including many shops and commercial premises.

There are statutory duties with regard to applications where the building is listed or where the proposal affects the setting of a listed building, where the Local Planning Authority must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. This relates both to works to the listed building itself and to works that affect the setting of a listed building. This is contained in Sections 16 and 66 of the above Act.

These provisions have been subject to case law in the High Court and Court of Appeal, and they must be given considerable importance and weight.

When the building is listed or located in a conservation area the highest standards of design and construction will be expected and special requirements may apply. The retention and repair of good quality shopfront, even if not original, will usually be expected. In some circumstances there may be a case for the replacement of poor quality or badly designed shop front with appropriate new installations, provided it can be shown that the result will be an enhancement of the building and its setting.

### **NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF)**

The NPPF should be read as a whole and is the main guidance from Government in relation to the determination of applications by the Local Planning Authority.

Chapter 16 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment, is the main part relative to heritage. This requires that great weight is given to a heritage assets conservation.

The NPPF 2019 says that the LPA should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage asset affected including any contribution made to their setting. This should be sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance. As a minimum the Heritage Environment Record should be consulted and the building assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary (para 189).

When considering the impact of development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. (para 193). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification (para 194). Where the proposal will lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be judged against the public benefit, of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (para 196)

The NPPF (para 192) also requires that in determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.