

*Draft Consultation



Bradford

Shopfront Design Guide

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1. Introduction

1.1. What is the purpose of the Bradford District Shopfront Design Guide?

This document sets out best practice for the design of shopfronts, signage and security measures across Bradford District. It promotes good design and positive change and is applicable to the city and town centres as well as local shopping parades and shops in other locations within the district.

Shopfronts and signage have a significant impact on the experience of people visiting our streets. When they are well-designed they can enhance our streets and contribute to the success of businesses. They can also create a more positive environment for our communities, improve public safety and increase property values.

The guide is intended to be user-friendly and simple to use by all parties who have an involvement in the design and formation of shopfronts, including business owners, architects, designers and fitters, planners and others.

Design Principles

Throughout the guide are a series of 'Design Principles' which set out the standards of design expected. In some locations, these may require traditional shopfronts which are in keeping with the historic character of the building or street in which it is located. Where there is an existing traditional shopfront, this may need to be repaired, restored or in some cases replaced to match the existing.



24 Market Street, Bradford

In other locations, a modern building may require a more contemporary design solution, which is innovative in terms of its design and of high quality.

In all cases, shopfronts will be expected to respect and celebrate the architectural character of the building on which it is located, carefully considering the proportions, materials and detailing, as well as things like advertisements and security features to enhance our streetscapes.



The Grove, Ilkley

1.2. Policy Context

As a 'Supplementary Planning Document' (SPD) this design guide will be a key consideration in assessing applications relating to shopfronts. It supports and elaborates on local planning policies set out in the adopted Bradford Local Plan.

The policies in the Local Plan most relevant to this guide are:

- **Policy D S 1: Achieving Good Design**, which emphasises taking an approach to design that looks at the wider context, putting the overall quality of the place first and taking the opportunity to improve areas.
- **Policy D S 3: Urban Character**, which requires that shopfronts should be designed to be consistent with the character, scale, quality and materials of the existing building and street scene.
- **Policy D S 5: Safe and Inclusive Places**, which identifies the importance of designing buildings to ensure easy access for all, and to create a safe and secure environment and reduce opportunities for crime.
- **Policy E N 3: Historic Environment**, which seeks to ensure the protection and enhancement of heritage assets in the district including conservation areas and listed buildings.
- **Policy E C 5: City, Town, District and Local Centres**, which aims to sustain and enhance the vitality of the district's centres and support businesses to adapt to changing economic circumstances.

This guide is also consistent with planning policy at national level, in particular it supports the following chapters of the National Planning Policy Framework:

- 7. Ensuring the vitality of town centres
- 8. Promoting healthy and safe communities
- 12. Achieving well-designed places
- 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Other related policies and guidance

This guide should be read in conjunction with any Neighbourhood Plan (see [here](#)) which covers the area where the shop is located as these form part of the Local Plan. Some of them include policy or guidance on shopfront design specific to the town or village.

For the Saltaire World Heritage Site, due to its international significance, the Council has published a separate Saltaire Shopfront Design Guide which should be read for specific guidance on the Site and its buildings (see [here](#)).

The Council has also published Conservation Area Assessments and Appraisals which include character specific design guidance for each of the 60 conservation areas in the district (see [here](#)).

Some parts of the district may have additional design guidance in relation to shopfronts, for example Haworth (see [here](#)) or the Bradford Heritage Action Zone (see [here](#)).



Mrs Beightons Sweet Shop, Haworth



14 Rawson Square, Bradford

2. History of Shopfronts

2.1. Origins and Emergence of the Shopfront

Retail began in open street markets with temporary stalls. During the Middle Ages, traders built houses around these markets, often with open ground floors for selling goods. As commerce grew, workshops moved to the rear or upper floors. Goods were displayed on shelves extending into the street, protected by wooden shutters at night. Early examples like The Shambles in York show how these buildings looked.

By the 17th century, shopfronts began to take shape with glazed screens enclosing the open stalls. This led to a standard format: a stall riser, window, door, and fascia. In the 18th century, Classical architecture influenced shopfront design, using crown glass divided by glazing bars to form the Georgian style.

Shopfronts mimicked temple fronts, with pilasters, friezes, and cornices becoming common features.



Fishmonger and poulterer, Oak Lane, (Bradford District Museums & Galleries, CBMDC)



The early 19th century shop window in 54 Old Main Street, Bingley shows the simplicity of early shopfronts



The Peculiar Shop, Haworth has a well detailed timber shopfront which dates from around the mid/late 19th century



Perfect Fit, Gordon Street



Bingley Road, Saltaire , 1959 (Credit Bradford District Museums and Galleries, CBMDC)

2.2. Georgian and Victorian

As towns like Bradford and Keighley expanded in the 19th century, shopfronts evolved with architectural trends and new materials.

Recessed doorways became standard, offering shelter and display space. Cylinder glass allowed larger panes, and simpler designs were typical in smaller villages. Georgian elegance gave way to more ornate Victorian styles, with vertical glazing bars and butted panes.

Mid-19th-century innovations like plate glass and cast iron enabled taller, more decorative shopfronts. Facias were angled downward for visibility, and pilasters became more elaborate. Console brackets showcased craftsmanship and sometimes symbolised the trade. Blinds evolved into advertising tools, and signage expanded to include icons and lettering on walls and gables. Butchers and fishmongers often used sash windows and hanging rails to display goods.



Broadway, Bradford in the early 1960s represented post-war fashions for shopfront design and building styles (Bradford District Museums & Galleries, CBMDC)

2.3. Contemporary Trends

Late Victorian excess led to the Arts and Crafts movement, favouring authenticity and craftsmanship. Shopfronts became taller with more glazing, simplified architectural details and simple decoration. Edwardian designs reflected this shift and many good examples still remain throughout the district.

After World War I, modern materials like vitrolite and chrome introduced minimalist styles, often clashing with older buildings. World War II accelerated this trend, with functional designs in concrete and plastic dominating post-war retail architecture.

The 1980s saw a nostalgic revival of traditional styles, though often lacking historical accuracy. While Georgian and Victorian designs returned to favour, poor aesthetic choices and commercial pressures have sometimes led to unattractive streetscapes.

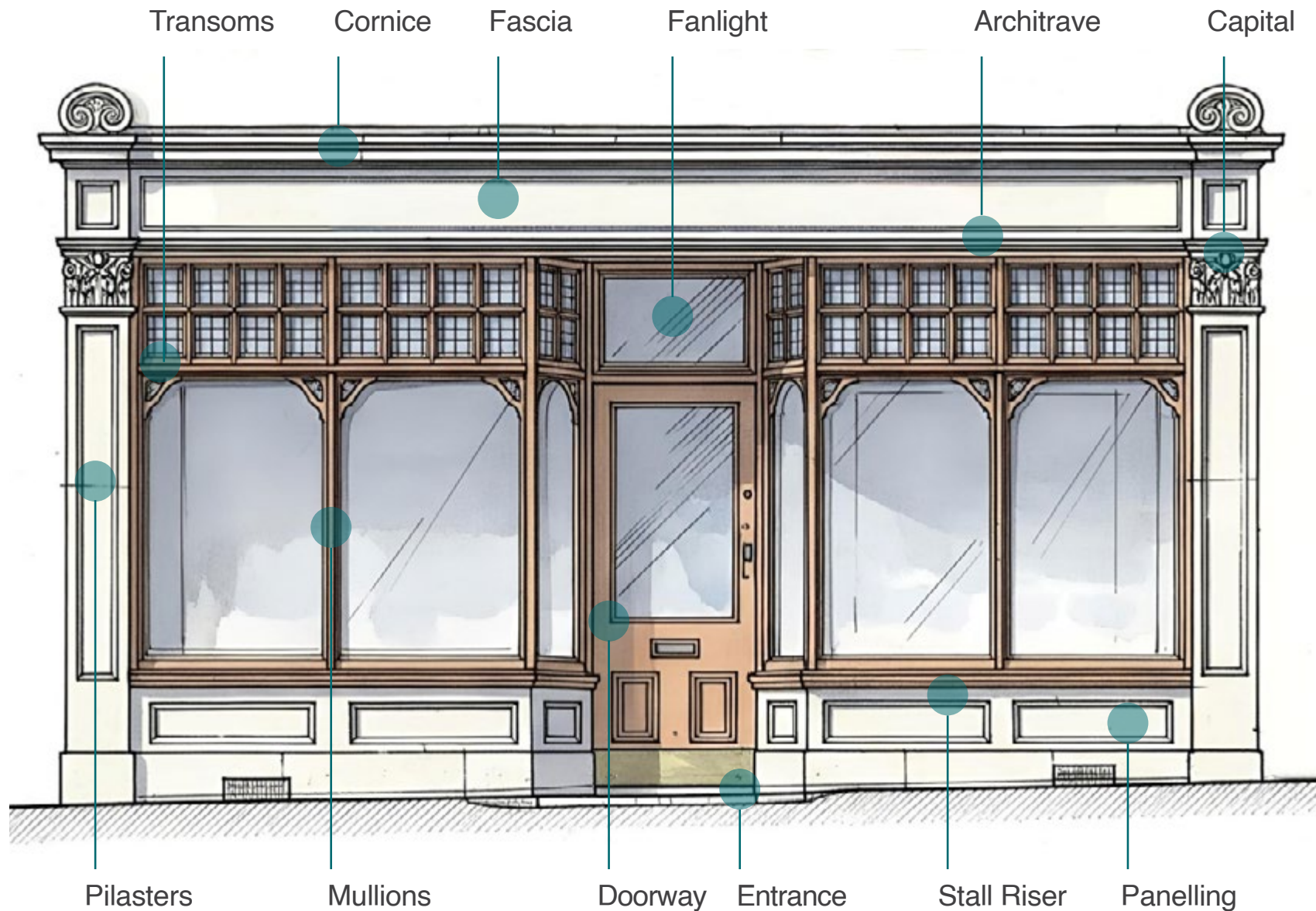


Zizzi, Charles Street, Bradford



Sapa, Market Street, Bradford

3. Traditional Shopfront Components



3.1. Description of Shopfront Components

Transoms	Horizontal bars that divide the window panes or openings
Cornice	A decorative horizontal molding above the fascia that projects along the top of the shopfront
Fascia	The horizontal board above the windows, typically used for signage
Fanlight	A window with simple or decorative glazing, often square, arched or semi-circular above the entrance door
Architrave	A molding that frames the window and door openings
Capital	Often the ornamented or functional top of a column or pilaster
Pilasters	Vertical columns that frame the shopfront and define its edges
Mullions	Vertical bars that divide the window panes or openings
Doorway	Recessed entrance to a shop or store that is often a sheltered area.
Entrance	Often recessed threshold, wide and welcoming with the tiled floor
Stall Riser	A solid panel or robust base below the windows, often made of timber, stone, or tiling
Panelling	Decorative panels found in doors or stall risers



Waltons Fine Furnishings, Ilkley is a good example of a well preserved Edwardian shopfront

4. Traditional Shopfronts

Before deciding to replace an existing shopfront, assess its condition, craftsmanship, and historical relevance.

Even if it's been altered over time, there may be original features hidden beneath modern cladding—features that, if restored, could complement the building and its surroundings.



4.1. Quality and Craftsmanship

Older shopfronts often showcase a level of craftsmanship that's difficult to replicate today, and full replacement is rarely necessary for practical reasons. Restoration or repair is not only more sustainable, but it often results in a more authentic and visually appealing outcome.

When a shopfront holds historic value, showcases a rare or exemplary style, or simply enhances the character of its building and the surrounding area, the default approach should be preservation and sensitive adaptation—not replacement.

In listed buildings, conservation areas, or on buildings of local traditional character, any work that would remove, obscure, or damage a shopfront's traditional or historic features is not acceptable. These elements are part of the story of the street and retaining them helps maintain the visual and cultural integrity of the area.

Keighley Washer & Vac, Low Street, Keighley
forms part of the Grade II listed Royal Arcade and retains its early 20th century shopfront.



La Beaute, North Parade, Bradford has a simple but well preserved 19th century shopfront. The smaller panes of glass are typical of earlier examples of shopfronts.

4.2. Retain, Repair, Restore

The guiding principle is clear: retain original materials and detailing wherever possible.



The original Victorian shopfront on **78 Old Main Street, Bingley** was retained after the property was converted into residential use

If parts of a historic shopfront are genuinely beyond repair, then replacement can be considered. Even in such cases, the expectation is for a like-for-like restoration, matching the original in:

- Materials
- Finish
- Size/proportions
- Design

This approach ensures that the shopfront continues to reflect its heritage while remaining functional and visually cohesive.

Design Principle A

Where traditional details are evident or likely to survive, the Council will seek the retention of these and their incorporation in the proposed development.

Replacement (partial or total) of a historic shopfront will generally only be supported where the existing shopfront or its individual features and detailing are demonstrably beyond repair, in which case the expectation would be for any deteriorated features and detailing to be replaced like-for-like (materials, finish, size and design).

Traditional shopfronts on **Wells Road, Ilkley (top)** and **West Lane, Haworth (bottom)**





The timber shopfront on **Cancer Research UK, The Grove, Ilkley**, is an excellent and well-maintained example of a finely detailed Edwardian shopfront.

5. Replacement of Shopfronts in Existing Buildings

Once restoration and repair options have been explored, the design of a new shopfront should be guided by the architecture of the building itself and the character of the surrounding area.

Key elements, such as the stallriser, doorway, pilasters, fascia, and cornice, should work together in harmony with the building's proportions and detailing. The shopfront should reflect the building's width and vertical divisions, rather than obscure them.

To maintain architectural unity:

- Continue vertical lines (like window bays or pilasters) down through the shopfront
- Avoid full-width designs that make the upper floors of the building appear disconnected from the ground floor
- Use stone or, if appropriate brick, piers or pilasters if needed to visually anchor the shopfront



Hair of Hockney, Bingley

5.1. Respecting the Character of the Street

Avoid creating a monotonous row. If the street features a uniform architectural style, similar shopfronts may be appropriate but in areas with diverse buildings from different periods, variety adds charm. Historic areas often thrive on irregularity, and shopfronts should reflect that richness.

To determine the right design for a traditional building, look to:

- Surviving architectural details
- Neighbouring or similar buildings
- The building's style and proportions
- Archival photographs or historical records

5.2. Proportion Matters

A well-balanced shopfront respects the building's scale and avoids overwhelming it. Leave a clear gap between the top of the shopfront and the first-floor windowsills to prevent the building from looking "chopped" in half. Large expanses of plate glass and oversized fascias often clash with traditional shopping streets.

Each element should be in proportion:

- Stallriser height: ideally no more than 20% of the shopfront's total height
- Entablature (cornice, fascia/sign, architrave): also no more than 20%

Finally, pay attention to common features along the street, such as bay widths, stallriser heights, fascia depths, and glazing subdivisions to ensure your design fits seamlessly into its context.



The Grove, Ilkley



Westrow, Station Road, Ilkley is a good example of a replacement shopfront which replicates traditional detailing



Westrow, Main Street, Bingley

5.3. Seeing the Bigger Picture

The visual interest and character of a shopping street often comes from either a harmonious uniformity or a vibrant mix of architectural styles. Both can create a sense of place and local identity. Every shopfront proposal should consider not just the building, but the entire street scene in order to enhance, not disrupt, the overall aesthetic.

A bold design might grab attention, but standing out too much can backfire. Shoppers are drawn to environments that feel inviting and well-considered. Respecting the look and feel of the street leads to a more attractive retail experience, benefiting businesses, customers, and the community alike.



Golden Catch, Harrogate Road, Bradford

5.4. Balancing Brand and Context

Corporate branding doesn't always translate directly into historic or traditional shopping areas. Often, it needs to be adapted to suit the building and its surroundings. However, a fresh design with genuine merit, especially one that improves upon what was there before, can be appropriate.



Tap and Tonic of Haworth demonstrates how a reinstating a traditional shopfront can enhance not just the building, but the wider street too.

Design Principle B

Proposals for new shopfronts or alterations to existing frontages should follow the following principles:

- New shopfronts in existing buildings should be integrated with the form, style and character of the building façade and its neighbours, respecting its proportions and details and using materials appropriate to the building.
- The proposals incorporate the key elements of shopfront design, proportionately in relation to each other.
- The proposals do not detract from the character or appearance of the shopfront or the streetscape.
- Where a shopfront occupies more than one building or unit, the division between the two is identifiable and the fascia maintains this separation.



Introducing an additional doorway for upper floor access needs to be carefully considered so that proportions are retained -
15 North Parade, Bradford



Mint Velvet, The Grove, Ilkley

6. Modern Shopfronts in New Buildings

The guidelines for existing buildings are rooted in well-established design principles.

However, they're just as relevant to shopfronts in modern and new buildings.



A shopfront should never feel like an afterthought, it must be thoughtfully designed as part of the building itself, embracing core design values that ensure cohesion and visual appeal.

Contemporary shopfronts should be well integrated into the architecture of the building. Their design must reflect the building's overall style, using materials, proportions, and detailing that are consistent with its contemporary character.

Avoid imitating historic styles unless they are clearly justified by the surrounding context.

6.1. Connecting to the Street

Transparency is a key principle in modern shopfront design. Glazing should be maximised to allow clear views into the interior as this encourages interaction between the shop and the street.

Glazing, ideally full-height or in large display windows, helps create a sense of openness and connection between the shop and the street.

Designs that rely heavily on tinted glass, blank panels or excessive frosting are discouraged as these can make the frontage feel closed off and uninviting.

The shopfront at Specsavers, Broadway, Bradford exemplifies modern simplicity in a contemporary building – large, well-proportioned windows, carefully positioned signage and good accessibility make the front both visually appealing and user-friendly.

6.2. Designing in the Details

The guiding principle is clear: retain original materials and detailing wherever possible.

- Materials and finishes should be of high quality, durable, and appropriate to the building's architectural language. Powder-coated aluminium, steel, glass, and engineered timber often work well in contemporary buildings. Overly reflective or garish finishes can disrupt the visual rhythm of the street and should be avoided.
- Signage should be clear, well-proportioned, and seamlessly integrated into the overall design. Subtle lighting—such as backlit or halo-lit signs—can add sophistication without overwhelming the façade. The aim is to communicate brand identity while respecting the building and its surroundings.
- Entrances must be easy to find and should be designed with accessibility in mind. Level thresholds, automatic doors, and clear sightlines all contribute to a more inclusive and user-friendly experience.



The shopfront at **Design Quarter and Jewels by Imaan, Bradford Lane, Laisterdyke** shows how simple contemporary design can present an eye catching and enticing shop frontage to the street.

6.3. Sustainability Built In

Sustainability should be woven into every stage of the design. Energy-efficient glazing and lighting, passive solar strategies, and even green technologies like solar panels or living walls can all contribute to a more environmentally responsible shopfront.

Design Principle C

Proposals for shopfronts in new or contemporary buildings should:

- Be designed as an integral part of the building's architecture, respecting its proportions and contributing positively to the building and the streetscape
- Promote transparency, accessibility and an active frontage through good design
- Materials, signage and lighting should be high quality, co-ordinated and appropriate to the context in which the building is located
- Consideration should be given to opportunities to integrate sustainability and green technologies sensitively within the design.



Riwayah and Heavenly Desserts, both Leeds Road, Thornbury

demonstrate how a well designed shopfront can utilise proportions, glazing and well positioned signage in a modern building to showcase a small business.





Darley Street Market, Darley Street, Bradford opened in 2025 and showcases excellent contemporary shopfront design in a modern building which incorporates sustainable features including solar roof panels, smart rainwater harvesting and a heat recovery ventilation plant.

7. Shopfront Design Principles

A shopfront is a key element of a building — it shapes the character of the entire street. A well-designed frontage can boost a business's image and revenue, while also enhancing the streetscape and inspiring others to follow suit.

Conversely, a poorly designed or overly dominant shopfront can disrupt the harmony of the street and detract from nearby businesses.

The following principles should be used when repairing, altering or replacing shopfront elements and will be used by the Council to inform decision-making.

7.1. Doors and Windows

Taking into account the access requirements outlined below (see Chapter 9), windows and doors should align in proportion, material, and finish, creating a unified look that complements the building's character.

Architectural detailing, like integrated glazing bars and mullions, should be thoughtfully placed to echo the rhythm of the elevation above, helping new interventions blend seamlessly into their surroundings.



Main Street, Haworth

Fanlights and transoms above doors and windows add visual interest and elegance, and result in better appearance than blank panels or oversized fascias. Their design should be consistent across the shopfront.

Integrating Upper-Floor Access

If access to upper floors is needed, additional doors should be designed as part of the shopfront, not as disconnected elements. These doors should be visually subservient to the main display windows, smaller in scale and impact, but still cohesive in style.

Design Principle D

Windows and doors should be designed as harmonious, functional elements that enhance the shopfront's character, support accessibility, and contribute to a welcoming street presence.



3 Victoria Road, Saltaire



Colour and materials choices make an important contribution to the appearance and appeal of the shopfront as well as the wider streetscape

Depth, Texture & Contextual Sensitivity

The depth of the shopfront, including recessed doors, window reveals, and external lobbies should respond to the building's age, style, and surrounding context.

Glazing

If subdividing shop windows into smaller panes, use structural (integrated) glazing bars. Applied bars—whether internal or external—are generally discouraged, especially in historic buildings or conservation areas.

Windows and doors should be designed as harmonious, functional elements that enhance the shopfront's character, support accessibility, and contribute to a welcoming street presence.

The application of vinyls to glazed areas is discouraged, it can detract from the character of traditional shopfronts and reduce visibility into and out of the shop.

7.2. Materials and Colours

Timber is the most appropriate material for a traditional shopfront in a historic building. Its versatility allows for elegant detailing and a high-quality finish that complements a wide range of architectural styles and adds authenticity.

In modern buildings or those with distinctive design features, other materials may be used to great effect. Aluminium may be acceptable but is more suited to contemporary settings. Where it is acceptable, it should always be powder-coated in a colour finish to avoid a utilitarian or industrial look.

- **Stallrisers:** Traditionally, these are timber, but ashlar masonry offers a sturdy alternative, especially useful for added protection against ram-raiding. They help visually tie the shopfront to the building's façade.
- **Pilasters:** These vertical elements should reflect the building's primary material, ensuring visual harmony between adjoining premises.
- **Polished Granite:** Occasionally appropriate for stall risers and piers, but only when it complements the building's style and era.
- **Fully Glazed Fronts & Modern Stone Designs:** These can work well in the right context, especially when simplicity and a contemporary approach is key.

Plastic is never acceptable—it lacks the durability, elegance, and contextual sensitivity needed for quality shopfront design.

The colour choice and finish of materials should enhance the shopfront and streetscape and achieve a unified approach. Shopfronts usually look best if a limited palette of colours is used.

- Opt for restrained tones like maroon, deep green, black, navy, brown, or grey. These shades tone well with traditional architecture and age gracefully whilst also looking equally as elegant on contemporary shopfronts.
- Avoid light or excessively bright colours—they often clash with historic surroundings and show dirt more quickly, demanding frequent upkeep.
- If stonework is meant to be exposed, retain its natural finish. If it's been painted in the past and stripping it would cause damage, repainting in a Yorkshire stone tone is the best compromise.



8 Bank Street, Bradford

Design Principle E

Shopfronts should use materials and colours that enhance the architectural character of the building and surrounding streetscape, while ensuring durability, elegance, and contextual harmony.



Top: Vacant unit, Wells Road

Bottom: Perfect Fit, Godwin Street

7.3. Signage

Signage is a key part of retail success and a key contributor to the visual identity of a building and its street. Thoughtful design and placement can elevate a shopfront, while poor choices can diminish its appeal.

Guiding Principles for Shopfront Signage

Signs should be an integral part of the shopfront design—not an afterthought. A well-crafted sign adds individuality and identity without clashing with its surroundings. Signage must not dominate the building and should relate well to building frontage, its architectural features and its character.

On most shopfronts, the fascia is the prime location for signage. Its size and shape should follow the proportions of the frontage. Fascia signs should be located below the first-floor cills, unless there is evidence of historic signage above.

Timber fascias with hand-painted or individually applied lettering are ideal for traditional shopfronts. Gilded letters or bold colours on dark backgrounds enhance visibility, especially at night. Techniques like shading or shadowing add character and depth. The height of lettering should be no more than two-thirds of the height of the fascia and should usually be centred, leaving reasonable space at either end of the fascia.

Where a shop occupies more than one unit, each should have a separate fascia, which is linked by a common design.

On listed buildings, in conservation areas and on non-designated heritage assets, consider individually mounted letters or symbols that respect the building's historic value.



Little England, Bingley

What to Avoid

- Don't let fascias cover upper transom windows or decorative cornices.
- Never remove or damage original stone or timber features to fit signage.
- Plastic fascia signs and box signage is generally not appropriate—they rarely suit the context.
- Temporary banners on listed buildings or in conservation areas require consent and are generally discouraged due to their intrusive fixings and visual impact.



7.3.1. Illumination

Lighting can enhance signage—but it must be done with care and should relate to the design of the shopfront as well as the building as a whole, and the wider streetscape. The following guidance should be used when considering whether illuminated signage is appropriate:

- Box signs with internal illumination are bold and often intrusive. They always require advertisement consent and will not be permitted on listed buildings or in conservation areas.
- Consideration could be given to halo lighting behind individual letters, discreet spotlights, or slim strip lights that highlight the fascia without overwhelming it. Internally illuminated individual letters may be acceptable in some contexts as a less obtrusive alternative to box signs.
- Flashing, intermittent lights, exposed neon tubes or other intrusive forms of illumination will not be supported.
- In some sensitive locations, unilluminated signage may be necessary to maintain the character of the building or the wider streetscape.

Carefully considered signage on **Cafe Nero, Market Street, Bradford** is effective without dominating the shopfront

7.3.2. Hanging & Projecting Signs

Traditional hanging signs can add character and visual interest to the street — especially when they reflect the trade, like a barber's pole or a teapot for a café. One hanging sign is usually acceptable if it's modest in size and complements nearby signage.

- Lighting should be subtle, such as a slim strip light, not internal illumination.
- Signs should align with architectural features, typically level with first-floor windows or between the fascia's architrave and cornice. The bottom edge must be at least 2.6 metres above the pavement.
- Projecting illuminated signs are rarely appropriate for listed buildings due to their visual impact. Where allowed, they should be carefully positioned — typically on the pilaster within the fascia height — and designed to harmonise with the building.

In some cases, the building or street character may not suit hanging signs at all.

Broadway, Bradford





7.3.3. Other Signage Options

- Signs on gable ends or above the first-floor window cill are generally not acceptable.
- Painted advertisements on masonry gables or individually mounted letters may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Keep signage coordinated and minimal to avoid clutter that detracts from the building and streetscape.
- Where fascia space is limited, consider tasteful lettering or transfers on glazing—either in the upper transom or main windows. Choose colours and styles that avoid a garish or overcrowded look.

Creative ideas may be required in instances where standard signage solutions aren't appropriate such as at **Waterstones, Wool Exchange, Bradford**

Design Principle F

Proposals to display signs or advertisements should meet the following criteria:

- The size, design and number of any advertisements respect the character, scale, design and location of the building and shopfront on which it is displayed, and the streetscape.
- The advertisement is properly related to and integrated into the shopfront that it serves.
- With regard to a listed building, conservation area or other sensitive areas, the advertisements are not internally illuminated and do not adversely affect the character or appearance of the building or the streetscape.



The Cabinet of Curiosities, Main Street, Haworth



Well designed canopies such as this one on **Victoria Road, Saltaire** should complement the building as well as having a practical function

7.4. Awnings, Canopies and Blinds

Blinds and canopies aren't just decorative—historically, they've served a practical purpose in retail. Originally introduced to shield goods from harsh sunlight, they also helped cool shop interiors and offered shelter to customers and passersby during rain.

A Brief History of Shopfront Blinds

Late 18th Century: Simple canvas roller blinds came into, with the roller box mounted above the cornice. Simple, functional, and elegant.

Mid-19th Century: Roller boxes became integrated into the shopfront—positioned above the sign but beneath the cornice. These blinds, often striped and featuring the shop's name, became a retractable feature of traditional storefronts.

1960s Onward: the Dutch canopy—a rigid or folding curved design made from plastic stretched over metal came into use. While common, these fixed canopies often obscure architectural details and clash with historic buildings due to their shape and materials.

Permissions & Approvals

- **No Advertisement:** Planning permission is required for any blind or canopy.
- **With Advertisement:** You'll need both advertisement consent and planning permission.
- **Listed Buildings:** Any blind—traditional or modern—requires Listed Building Consent in addition to the above. Dutch canopies are not permitted on listed buildings or in conservation areas.

Modern roller blinds or canopies may be approved if they:

- Complement the building's architecture
- Do not obscure decorative features
- Stay below the first-floor window cill level
- Use non-glossy, non-plastic materials that blend with the streetscape and respect the character of the building
- Blinds should extend no more than 1 metre behind the kerb line
- Installations should have a minimum clearance of 2.14 metres above the pavement (including supports)

Design Principle G

Awnings and canopies should be designed as functional extensions of the shopfront that complement and enhance the building's architectural identity and should not obscure architectural details.

Lishman's, Leeds Road, Ilkley



7.5. Ventilation

To protect the character of the streetscape and shopfronts, any new ventilation equipment, such as air conditioning units or ventilation grilles, must be carefully designed and positioned. Oversized or poorly placed installations that visibly alter the shopfront's appearance are unlikely to be approved, as they can undermine the building's visual quality and the surrounding area's appeal. Instead, such systems should be tucked away in less prominent locations, such as rear elevations or internal risers, where they can be placed without disrupting the character and appearance of the shopfront.

Materials should be durable and should harmonise with the material palette of the building. Finishes should be non-reflective and usually of a dark or muted colour, to minimise the visual impact.

Stallriser ventilation on
Westrow, Station Road, Ilkley



Design Principle H

Ventilation systems must be integrated into buildings in a way that preserves architectural integrity and enhances the streetscape.

Installations such as grilles, louvres, and mechanical equipment should be discreetly located and designed to harmonize with the shopfront's materials and proportions.

Visible alterations that detract from the shopfront's appearance or the character of the streetscape will not be supported.



Well integrated ventilation in the stallriser of the shopfront, **Fusion Chocolate, Leeds Rd, Ilkley**

8. Shopfront Security

Shopfront security is often a major concern for shop and business owners and there is a need to balance addressing security issues for shops while respecting the wider environment and public interests.

By their nature, security features are often highly visible and can significantly affect the appearance of the shopfront and the wider streetscape. However, it is important that shopfronts and streets remain attractive, especially during the evening and hours of darkness. Security solutions must strike a careful balance, they should deter crime while still allowing the street to feel open, safe, and inviting.

The approach set out in this guide is based on preventing opportunities for crime through good design. Key to this is the principle of natural surveillance of streets and public spaces and always being able to see what is happening from inside and outside the shop.

When considering security shopkeepers should first consider measures that provide deterrence, delay and detection opportunities, such as specialist toughened glazing, internally fitted grilles, CCTV and alarm systems.



Colour coordinated internal security measures, Upper Piccadilly, Bradford

In circumstances where shopfronts require additional protection this guide allows for consideration of physical security measures, whilst ensuring this does not have a detrimental impact on local character, crime or quality of the wider environment.

There is no 'one-size fits all' solution and ideally any proposals for new shopfront security should be based on a Crime Impact Statement. Certainly, this will be required for any proposals for external security measures such as roller shutters (see 8.3 below).

8.1. Glazing

As a first line of defence, laminated or toughened glass should be considered. Laminated security glass provides robust protection for shopfronts without compromising their visual appeal, as it requires no additional fixings.

It is particularly recommended for traditional shopfronts, which may have fragile glass that is vulnerable to breakage. Another option to consider is specialist toughened glass (glazed polycarbonate panels), which are virtually unbreakable and have high levels of transparency and clarity.

The use of mullions and transoms is recommended to divide up large sections of glazing to reduce the costs of replacing panels should any damage occur as well as adding character to the shopfront.

For optimal performance, laminated or reinforced glazing may need to be installed within a reinforced frame and stall riser, enhancing its resistance to impact and forced entry.

While the installation of strengthened glass does not typically require planning permission, Listed Building Consent may be necessary if the property is a listed building.

8.2. Internal Security

When a physical barrier is needed within a shopfront, the most appropriate and visually sensitive solution is an internal lattice or brick-bond grille. These options offer effective security while maintaining the integrity and appearance of the shopfront.



Brides to be, Scarlet Heights, Queensbury – The internal concertina grilles allow for views of the goods when closed and can be neatly tucked away inside the window jams when open

Internal grilles are typically installed behind the glazing and have minimal impact on the external façade, especially if they are set back from the shop window, ideally by at least 1m, to allow visibility of the window display.

In most cases, they do not require planning permission. However, if the property is listed, Listed Building Consent may be required, and proposals will be assessed to ensure they do not harm the building's historic character.

The size and placement of grilles should be proportionate to the window opening. During trading hours, grilles can be retracted into discreet box housings, often located behind or within the window fascia, preserving the shopfront's open and inviting appearance.

The Council's preferred approach is the use of internal grilles, which offer a balance between security and visual openness. They allow for passive surveillance of the shop interior from the street, helping to maintain a sense of activity and safety even outside business hours.



Il Pizzata Pirata, Bingley Road, Saltaire – Example of an internal shutter set back behind the window with simple lighting and display in front contributing to nighttime appeal.

Design Principle

Shopkeepers should consider glazing and/or internal solutions as the first preference for providing security for their shopfronts. Supported measures include:

- Laminated security glass or specialist toughened glass (clear polycarbonate panels) with appropriate frame reinforcement
- Internal lattice or Brick Bond grilles installed behind the glazing



Differing approaches to internal security measures on properties in Ilkley

8.3. External Security

Where internal security is unlikely to be effective or is unsuitable then external security measures may be considered. This can include grilles, gates, railings or shutters.

Where justified by a 'Crime Impact Statement', this section of the guide allows for the adoption of enhanced measures that are appropriate to the level of risk, dependent on an agreed joint understanding between the applicant, Police Designing Out Crime Officer and Planning Officer.

General principles for external security

External security features should:

- be integrated sensitively into the overall shopfront design
- preserve transparency, support natural surveillance, and contribute positively to the streetscape.

Solid and opaque types of roller shutters (including perforated/pinhole types) are strongly discouraged for the following reasons:

Visual Blight: Solid shutters create a blank, lifeless façade that detracts from the character of the street.

Perception of Insecurity: Areas with solid shuttered shopfronts often feel unsafe or abandoned, discouraging footfall and investment.

Loss of Architectural Detail: Shutters can obscure signage, glazing, and design features that contribute to local identity.

Attract Graffiti: Solid shutters are frequently targeted for vandalism, compounding their negative impact.



The blank, unattractive appearance of solid, bare metal shutters creates a negative impression along a street. These types of shutters will not be supported.



Perforated or pinhole shutters are strongly discouraged. They offer very minimal transparency and often look similar to solid shutters in appearance.



Security gate on **Peter Frederick, Leeds, Road, Ilkley**

Crime Impact Statement

All applications for external security measures, including new or replacement roller shutters, need to include a Crime Impact Statement (CIS) as per the Council's requirements – see [here](#).

The Crime Impact Statement provides the opportunity for shopkeepers to present their case for why external security measures are needed.

Below are some suggestions of things to consider when preparing a statement:

- A description of what the shop is currently experiencing or why there is potential for it to be impacted by crime.
- Reference to other less visually intrusive security options you have tried or considered and an explanation of why these are unsuitable or have been ineffective.
- A summary of how the proposed security measures will contribute to a safe street environment and an engaging shopfront, particularly after hours.
- Details of relevant crime incidents affecting the premises or its immediate surroundings. This website may be useful: www.police.UK
- Seeking early input from the Police Designing Out Crime Officer (DOCO) is strongly encouraged to get advice on proposed security solutions ([see here](#)) and on achieving 'Secured By Design' accreditation which provides a recognised standard for security products.

This information should be included as a section entitled 'Crime Impact Statement' in the [Design and Access Statement](#) where one is required to be submitted.



Design guidance for external shutters

Where external security shutters are considered the most appropriate way of safeguarding a property, lattice, mesh and open design shutters help maintain a more vibrant street atmosphere in comparison to solid shutters.

Their transparency avoids the visual deadening effect of solid shutters and contributes to a safer public realm by allowing visibility into the shop and deterring break-ins.

Incorporating lighting behind the shutters can enhance nighttime appeal and discourage vandalism, making the shopfront more engaging even after hours.

When retracted, they should be housed discreetly to avoid visual clutter and maintain the integrity of the shopfront's design. This may involve the need to replace features like the fascia to house the shutter box or frames/pilasters to integrate the guide rails.

It is important that new features are not simply affixed on top of existing ones so that they project outwards from the building, they should sit flush with the shopfront.

Design integration with the building's architecture is essential. Shutters should complement the character of the structure and the surrounding streetscape having regard to scale, proportions, architectural details and materials.

External security measures should allow good visibility into the shopfront and be visually well integrated to the frontage.

In most instances shutters should only need to cover potential vulnerable areas such as the doorway or glazing rather than extending across the whole shopfront. Care should be taken not to cover up or interfere with existing positive architectural features of the building.

Colour choices and finishes should harmonise with the existing palette and materials. Shutters of a bare steel or overly metallic appearance are very unlikely to be acceptable, powder-coated aluminium shutters in a colour to match the shopfront are a better solution.

External security in Centres and Heritage Contexts

Proposals for external security measures including shutters are generally unlikely to be suitable in the city centre, town centres, conservation areas and listed buildings. A higher benchmark will apply in these areas due to their importance and special interest.

Any proposals for external security would need to be supported by clear evidence of crime risk in the Crime Impact Statement and be jointly agreed by the Police Designing Out Crime Officer and Planning Officer.

In situations where external security is deemed to be justified the visual impact should be mitigated by wider works to enhance the overall quality of the shopfront including restoring traditional elements particularly in heritage contexts.

As a minimum this should include those elements critical to housing any shutter/grille mechanisms such as fascias, frames and pilasters.

It could also include improvements to other elements such as doors, windows and signage in accordance with the guidance elsewhere in this guide and appropriate to the building's character.



External security grills on a shopfront in
Queensbury



Additionally for Listed Buildings given their special historic interest any proposals will need to be sensitively designed to complement and preserve the historic fabric of the building.

Where it would cause harm to its heritage significance this harm would need to be clearly outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Public benefits would be judged on a case-by-case basis and would need to be of a nature that benefits the public at large and not just business owners. It could include things like securing the optimum viable use for the long-term conservation of the building, reducing or removing risks to the building, and sustaining or enhancing its heritage significance and setting.

Within the Saltaire World Heritage Site, due to its international significance, reference should be made to the separate Saltaire Shopfront Design Guide for specific guidance on the Site and its buildings, including how to integrate shopfront security ([Saltire Shopfront Design Guide](#)).

Well-designed security gates can be used effectively to protect vulnerable doorways or entrances.

Design Principle J1

External security measures including shutters will be considered when internal measures are considered unsuitable or ineffective, and where it will not have a detrimental impact on crime or local character.

- All proposals for external shutters should:
- Be visually permeable (not solid or perforated shutters).*
- Contain and conceal shutter boxes and guide rails within the fascia and other parts of the shopfront frame structure so that they sit flush with the façade.
- Use painted or powder coated finishes and colours that complement the building and its surrounding context.
- Avoid obstructing architectural features or signage.

If the shopfront is in a town/city centre, conservation area or listed building then additionally see Design Principle J2.

* Visually open shutters should allow clear visibility of the shop windows, for example lattice brick bond type shutters. Small areas of more solid construction may be permissible at the top and/or bottom of the shutter.

Design Principle J2

In centres, conservation areas and listed buildings any proposals for external security measures including shutters will, in addition to principle J1, be considered when:

- The Crime Impact Statement clearly evidences that the premises require enhanced protection.
- Other enhancements to the shopfront are achieved which mitigate the visual impact of the external security/shutter and result in an overall improvement to the appearance of the shopfront.

Additionally for listed buildings:

- Any security measures are sensitively designed to complement and preserve the historic fabric and significance of the building.
- Where proposals would result in harm to the heritage significance of the building this should be clearly outweighed by public benefits



8.4. CCTV & Alarms

To maintain the visual integrity of shopfronts and surrounding architecture, CCTV cameras and alarm boxes should be discreetly and logically positioned on the façade.

These installations must not obscure or detract from architectural features, decorative detailing, or glazing. Their finish, size, and design should be carefully selected to complement the existing building and streetscape, ensuring minimal visual impact.

When external lighting is proposed, it should take the form of subtle spotlights or similar low-profile fixtures. Large floodlights or industrial-scale fittings are not acceptable, as they can overwhelm the façade and disrupt the character of the area.

In contrast, well-designed, discreet lighting that gently illuminates shop entrances is generally supported and can enhance both visibility and ambience.

All equipment and associated installations should be coordinated with the shopfront design and harmonize with the broader streetscene.

External cabling, fixtures, and fittings should be avoided wherever possible. Where necessary, they must be minimally used and carefully routed to remain unobtrusive. Where possible, wireless systems are encouraged as a more integrated solution.

Design Principle K

Security equipment should be installed with discretion and respect for the building's character. CCTV cameras and alarm boxes must be positioned to ensure effective coverage while minimizing visual intrusion.

This means aligning with architectural features, using compact or colour-matched units, and avoiding clutter near signage or decorative elements.



Well-positioned and colour coordinated alarm boxes and CCTV cameras.



8.5. Doorways

Secondary entrances, such as rear access points and shopfront doorways, are often vulnerable to unauthorised entry and may be targeted by criminals. To enhance security while maintaining visual harmony, the preferred solution is the installation of internal lattice grilles. These offer effective protection without compromising the building's appearance.

Depending on the property, railings or gates may also be suitable. When appropriately designed, gates can help define and safeguard private frontages, contributing to both security and streetscape character.

For rear doorways or recessed entrances, painted or powder-coated metal gates may be used—provided they are sympathetically designed to complement the building's architecture. Similarly, rear windows may be fitted with protective bars, as long as these additions do not detract from the building's aesthetic or the surrounding area's character.

In all cases, planning permission (and Listed Building Consent in the case of listed buildings) is required for these types of external security measures, and designs should be carefully considered to balance safety with visual impact.

Security gates protecting a recessed doorway on
North Parade, Bradford.

Design Principle L

Doorway security should be discreetly integrated, using well-designed measures that enhance safety without compromising the building's character or streetscape.



Examples of security gates in **Bingley and Ilkley**.



Rimmingtons, Bridge Street, Bradford

Other resources

West Yorkshire Police's 10 Principles of Crime Prevention may be of use to shopkeepers in assisting them reduce opportunities for crime and identifying potential weak spots and areas for improvement.

[The 10 Principles of Crime Prevention | West Yorkshire Police](#)

Larger premises should be aware of their responsibilities under The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, commonly referred to as Martyn's Law. [Martyn's Law Factsheet – Home Office in the media](#)

The Protect UK website provides information for larger businesses linking in with Counter Terrorism Security Advisors. [ProtectUK](#)



German Doner Kebab, Broadway, Bradford

9. Accessibility

Alterations to shopfronts present an opportunity, not just to refresh the look, but to make the space more welcoming and accessible to everyone.

That includes people with disabilities, parents with prams, older adults, and anyone who benefits from easier navigation.

Under the Equality Act 2010, service providers are legally required to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers that prevent disabled people from accessing their services. This includes physical features of premises.

The Building Regulations 2025, particularly Approved Document M: Access to and Use of Buildings, reinforce this by requiring inclusive design in all new and substantially altered buildings. The emphasis is on creating environments that are safe, usable, and dignified for all.



Carefully designed solutions can improve accessibility to existing buildings, such as at **City Vaults, Hustlergate, Bradford**

Design for Accessibility: Key Principles for New Buildings and Alterations to Existing Buildings

- **Step-Free Access:** Avoid steps wherever possible. Use gently sloped ramps with non-slip surfaces to reach shopfloor level. If a step is present, a portable ramp or alternative entrance may be considered reasonable. Thresholds should be flush or ramped with a gradient no **steeper than 1:20**.



Accessibility needs to be incorporated into shopfront design at an early stage in new buildings.

- **Tactile Paving and Handrails:** Use tactile surfaces to signal changes in level, and install handrails for added safety and support.
- **Entrances and Doorways:**
 - Door should have a minimum clear opening which meets Building Regulations – doorways used by members of the public must be wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users, which generally means a clear opening width of at least 1,000mm for main entrance doors, however this varies depending whether the building is an existing building, a new building and other details such as whether this is a porch or lobby.
 - Doors should ideally open both ways without obstructing the pavement or requiring navigation over a step
 - Doors should be operable by people with limited strength or mobility. Automatic and power-assisted doorways are preferable. Manual doors should be lightweight and fitted with accessible handles.
 - Frameless glass doors should be avoided. Large glazed areas must include contrasting markings or signage to aid visibility for children and those with visual impairments.

Obstructions: Avoid placing bins or signage that obstruct access routes.

Lighting: Entrances must be well-lit to assist visibility and safety during the evening hours.

Improving access to listed buildings or in conservation areas can be challenging. Innovative, sensitive design solutions should be sought that balance accessibility with architectural integrity.

Design Principle M

Where a shopfront is substantially altered or replaced, the design must incorporate inclusive access provisions from the outset.

This includes making reasonable adjustments to ensure that primary access is equitable, unobstructed, and suitable for all users.

Access should be achieved within the boundary of the premises, and improvements should be made without causing disproportionate harm to the architectural character of the building or the surrounding streetscape.

New buildings must comply with current Building Regulations, including Approved Document M, and demonstrate best practice in inclusive design.



Halifax Bank, 28 Bank Street, Bradford

10. Planning Requirements

A shop is defined as any street-level premises featuring a fascia sign and/or display window. This includes not only traditional retail outlets but also non-retail businesses such as betting offices, restaurants, takeaways, amusement centres, estate agents, building societies, and other commercial premises located within shopping areas.

Certain minor changes to a shopfront can be made without planning permission, such as repainting or redecorating the shopfront and in some cases, alterations to existing signage will not require Advertisement Consent. However, more substantial alterations, will require planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Additionally, signage may require separate consent under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007 and if the building is listed, you may also need Listed Building Consent.

All applications will be assessed on their individual merits, with careful consideration of the design principles outlined in the guidance. The surrounding buildings and overall visual environment will be considered to ensure that any changes enhance and complement their setting.



12 Cowpasture Road, Ilkley

When submitting proposals for changes to shopfronts and/or signage, the Council expects a high standard of detail and clarity. Submissions must fully illustrate the proposed works and their impact on the site. Planning applications should include:

Planning applications should include:

- Detailed plans of both the existing and proposed shopfronts, at a scale of no less than 1:50
- Section drawings at a larger scale showing dimensions and features such as security provisions
- Specifications of proposed materials, finishes, and colours
- Full details of all signage, including illumination, materials, and colour

NOTE: Applications must include all required documentation as outlined in the [Planning Validation Checklists](#) available on the Council's website.

Different planning restrictions apply to different buildings, depending on their location and the protections put in place. These are outlined below.

10.1. Listed Building Consent

Any external and internal alterations to a Listed Building that will affect its special character, significance or appearance require Listed Building Consent prior to these works being undertaken.

The Council aims to preserve historic and traditional features on listed buildings and, where possible, encourages the reinstatement of appropriate traditional details to enhance their character. While the Council supports business needs, all proposals must respect the special architectural or historic significance of the building.



Store, Main Street, Haworth



Lefteris, Tyrrel Street, Bradford



Koor-i-Noor, Leeds Rd, Thornbury

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a criminal offence to alter, extend, or demolish any part of a listed building without first obtaining Listed Building Consent. Consent must be obtained before any work begins on shopfronts or signage involving a listed building.

For further guidance, contact Bradford City Council's Landscape, Design and Conservation team at: conservation@bradford.gov.uk

NOTE: Listed Building Consent is separate from planning permission and Advertisement Consent, and you may be required to submit a number of applications for the same works.

10.2. Planning Permission

Planning permission is required for any new shopfronts or alterations to existing ones that materially affect the external appearance of a building. The following changes to an existing shopfront typically require full planning permission:

- adding or removing or steps or a ramp;
- changing facing materials;
- removing any external architectural features;
- installing security shutters or external security grilles;
- installing an awning, blinds or a canopy (if displaying an advertisement – then Advertisement Consent is required additionally);
- altering the entrance door, including replacing the door with a different design or material as well as relocating the door opening or altering its size.
- altering the shop windows, including removal or addition of glazing;

Routine repairs and maintenance that do not alter the shopfront's appearance generally do not require planning permission. However, if the building is listed, Listed Building Consent will be required depending on the nature and impact of the work.

NOTE: Applications must include all required documentation as outlined in the [Planning Validation Checklists](#) available on the Council's website.

If the works affect a listed building or a conservation area or the setting of a heritage asset, a Heritage Statement is also required. For new shopfronts, additional materials may be requested, such as internal elevations, visuals, and detailed cross-sections.

For further guidance, contact Planning Services at:
CouncilContact.Planning@bradford.gov.uk



Mario's, Kirkgate, Bradford



Veggie Cafe, Leeds Road, Ilkley

NOTE: Additional restrictions apply in Conservation Areas, particularly regarding illuminated advertisements. For signage on Listed Buildings, Listed Building Consent is also required (see Section 10.1 for more information).

10.3. Advertisement Consent

Advertisement Consent is often required for the installation of external signage, including most illuminated signs.

Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007, the display of advertisements, including fascias, hanging signage, and banners, is regulated.

The current legislation on signage is complex and the regulations depend on factors such as:

- Size and type of the advertisement
- The location and level of illumination
- The use class of the premises being advertised

You should ascertain whether you need Consent at an early stage.

10.4. Building Regulations Approval

In addition to planning permission, Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent, certain works to shopfronts and buildings in general require Building Regulations approval.

A Building Regulations application is required for structural alterations, installation or alteration to main services, or modification of a shopfront (including alterations to access, glazing or means of escape).

As the requirements of Building Regulations are complex, we recommend that you contact Council's Building Control team to discuss this prior to starting any works to your premises at buildingcontrol@bradford.gov.uk

**Waterstones, The Wool Exchange,
Hustlergate, Bradford**



Contact

Planning Contact Centre telephone 01274 434605
Planning Contact Centre email CouncilContact.Planning@bradford.gov.uk

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