

Development Management

# Shopfronts

In the historic environment



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‘Informed conservation’ means understanding the historical development, and significance, of your building or area and identifying the most appropriate approach to its management.

## 1.0 Introduction

Shopfronts are a key feature of the traditional high street or city centre, as well as the corners of many residential terraces.

High quality, well maintained shopfronts make a significant positive contribution to the streetscene and can often reflect the vitality and viability of an area.

This guide provides advice on altering, restoring and replacing shopfronts and signage on buildings in the historic environment. The principles apply equally well to buildings not considered to be ‘heritage assets’, but the guide is primarily concerned with those buildings and areas that are recognised as being of historic interest.

Many of the operations referred to in this guide will require planning permission, advertisement consent or Listed Building Consent, and you should always engage with the council’s Development Management Service at the earliest opportunity for advice on what consents you require and the acceptability of your proposals.

**Please note that the Grainger Town Shopfront Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is formal planning guidance and must be adhered to by all applicants within the defined Grainger Market and Clayton Street area. This guide provides additional advice and covers the rest of the city.**

## 1.1 What is the historic environment?

The **historic environment** refers to evidence of human activity from all periods of our history in the form of buildings, monuments, sites and landscapes. It is an asset of enormous cultural, social, economic and environmental value, and Newcastle City Council sees the historic environment as a vital contributor to improving the quality of place and quality of life for all.

The historic environment contains many **heritage assets** – these can range from individual historic buildings to conservation areas and archaeological sites.

Newcastle has 12 conservation areas, over 4000 listed buildings, and over 250 locally listed sites, a good number of which are commercial and feature either shopfronts or signage, particularly in the city centre. There are also many shops and shopfronts which are of historic interest but which have no form of protection in conservation terms. This guide can, nonetheless, usefully be applied to all shopfronts in the city and should form a starting point for designs.

To check if your building is listed or in a conservation area you can use the map facility on the Newcastle City Council website [www.newcastle.gov.uk/map](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/map) or ask the Customer Service Centre. See inside cover for contact details.

## 1.2 What is a 'shopfront'?

Traditionally, retail outlets featured shopfronts with large glazed windows, which provided a dual function: to let light into the shop, and to prominently advertise the goods that were on sale inside.

Externally, shopfronts often also included evidence of the goods or services that were being traded, in the form of a sign or in the framework. Greengrocers, for example, often incorporated carved fruit into the timber framework, barber shops featured the instantly recognisable red and white striped pole, and pawnbrokers displayed three golden balls hung from a bar.

Today, 'shopfronts' have a range of purposes, and styles – many commercial properties in Newcastle now house bars, restaurants and cafes, for example.

In addition, many commercial buildings (including some shops) do not feature an active frontage at all, but may still rely on the ground floor design and signage to convey their services. Some of these types of business will be occupying the upper floors of a building and use the ground floor merely for access. These types of 'shopfront' are also considered in this document.

Most successful shopfronts and signs are visually stimulating, instantly recognisable and efficiently advertise the goods or services available for purchase. This is an important part of providing an 'active frontage' to the street. Good quality design will always be the best method of achieving this aim.



A traditional shopfront



A traditional pawnbrokers' sign on Nun Street in Grainger Town.



An interesting window display and well lit interior can be much more effective than additional signage.

## 1.3 Designing a shopfront: starting points

The starting point for a shopfront design, whether contemporary or traditional, should be the character and appearance of the host building. The traditional proportions and elements shown in section 3 should also provide a strong design cue.

It is vital, when designing a shopfront, that you give careful consideration to the context in which the shopfront will sit as the context will be a key factor in the acceptability of the proposed scheme.



This coffee shop on Grey Street is very grand and the shopfront fits its character.

Before you start, you should ask yourself the following questions:

### The business:

- What is the purpose of your shopfront?
- What goods or services are you selling, and what is the most appropriate means of advertising them?

### The host building:

- Was it built as a shop or does it have another character, e.g. as a domestic property?
- Is there a 'true' shopfront, or does the building require a more imaginative design approach?
- How will signage sit against the building and where is it best placed?
- What materials would sit well with the materials used on the building?
- Are there existing elements of a historic shopfront that you can re-use?
- Is there archive documentary evidence (such as old photographs) of the original shopfront?
- Is it a listed or locally listed building?
- Is it in a conservation area?
- What are the relevant local planning policies?
- Is there any additional adopted guidance that is relevant?

### The street:

- Are there other shops in the street?
- What are the patterns of windows, upper and ground floor arrangements, shopfronts and fascias?
- Is there a standard design or does it vary?
- What is the overall quality of the existing designs?

## 2.0 Types of shopfront

### 2.1 Historic and traditional shopfronts

Historic shopfronts often make a strong positive contribution to the street scene, and are an important part of the character of most shopping areas in the city, from Clayton Road in Jesmond to Newcastle city centre.

Most historic shopfronts are made up of a series of essential components, with fairly standard proportions. These basic principles are set out in section 3 of this guide.

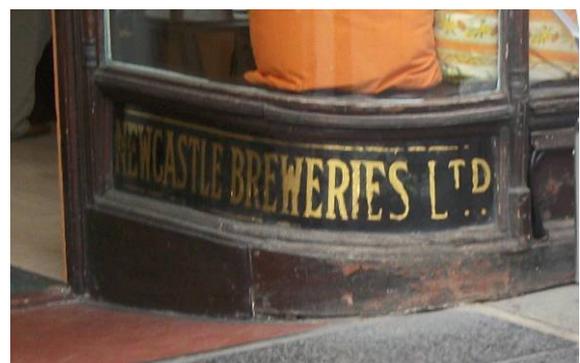
Where original, or historic, shopfronts remain intact they should always be retained and repaired or restored where possible. Where enough evidence remains to accurately reconstruct an historic shopfront which is mostly or totally lost, this is also firmly encouraged.

Sometimes only a very small section of the original shopfront will remain, but using the principles contained in this guide, and any documentary evidence of the original frontage, it is perfectly possible to design an appropriate, high quality shopfront, making use of the remnant historic features.

If there is a new use in the building which no longer requires a shopfront, this is not enough justification to lose the historic fabric. Historic shopfronts can and should be imaginatively and successfully incorporated into new developments.



Two historic shopfronts in the city centre of very different appearance but both with the same basic principles to their design.



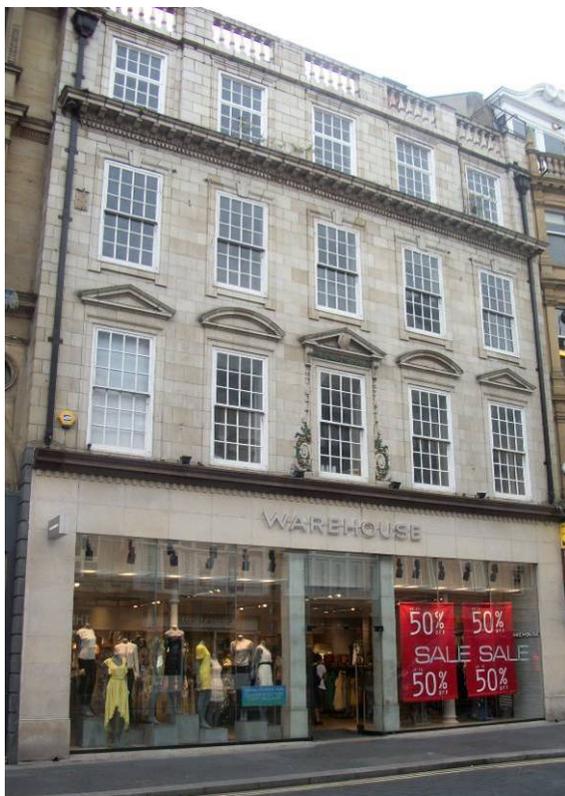
Small historical details add interest and can help to tell the story of a building, like this reference to Newcastle Breweries Ltd on the Central Exchange Building.

## 2.2 New shopfronts on historic buildings

Where all evidence of the historic shopfront is lost, or where the building did not originally feature a shopfront and a modern one has been inserted subsequently, consideration is likely to be given to a wider range of designs.

New, high quality shopfronts that are appropriate to the host building and the street should reflect (but not necessarily replicate) the proportions and character of an historic shopfront, but might introduce alternative materials.

Please note that this approach is dependent upon the location and status of the host building; shopfronts in the Grainger Market and Clayton Street area, for example, are required to meet the standards set out in the Grainger Town Shopfront Design Guidelines SPD.



This shopfront on Blakett Street reflects the basic proportions of the upper floors in a very simple manner and with complementary materials.

## 2.3 Shopfronts on new or modern buildings in historic areas

As with new shopfronts on historic buildings, care should be taken to ensure that new shopfronts sit well with the host building, and in the general street scene.

The basic proportions of traditional shopfronts should underpin the design, but it should also be viewed as an opportunity to design a high quality and exciting contemporary frontage which meets the needs of the retailer while also making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the street.



This new office development on Gallowgate features a café at ground floor. While unashamedly contemporary, the proportions still pick up on the rhythms of the street and the upper floors of the host building.

## 2.4 Signage on commercial buildings that do not feature shopfronts

Some commercial buildings in Newcastle have not been subject to the typical evolution of shopfronts as they were built as domestic properties, and have since been converted for offices and other uses. There are many streets in the city which are particularly notable for the retention of domestic façades, despite predominantly commercial usage.

While shopfronts, in the more traditional sense of the word, may have been inserted into some domestic properties, many retain their original appearance. It is vital, therefore, that signage on these buildings meets two key criteria; firstly that it is sensitive to and respects the character and appearance of the host building and townscape, and secondly that it is appropriate to the service it advertises.

Other buildings were built for commercial uses, such as banking, and many feature striking frontages which, again, do not conform to the traditional 'shopfront' image. Where original frontages remain they should be retained and, if necessary, adapted to a new use. 'Revolution' on Mosley Street is a fine example.

There are also a small number of other types of buildings in the city that have been converted to a commercial use; an example would be conversion of a church, or the industrial mills of the Ouseburn. An extremely sensitive approach is required to successfully accommodate signage on such buildings.



This bar and restaurant on Grey Street has introduced subtle signage above the door, and on the windows, without compromising the character or appearance of the building



This bar on Mosley Street was built as a bank, and retains that character (and the original 'bank' sign) while clearly being a bar.



This elegant frontage on Grey Street features extremely simple signage.

## 2.5 Historic public houses

Many historic pubs feature extremely attractive, and instantly identifiable, frontages and signage. Unlike traditional shopfronts, goods were rarely displayed in windows; instead bottles are displayed on a 'back bar', which can be very elaborate. Traditional elements of pubs such as these should be retained, and celebrated.

The basic premise of pub front design is very similar to a traditional shopfront, particularly in terms of proportions and common features, although they tend to be more decorative.

Often, the name of the pub was incorporated into the design, perhaps in ceramic tiles as at the Gosforth Hotel (below). Hanging signs are also a typical feature.

Today it is common to see numerous additional signs, banners and posters in windows advertising drinks promotions and events. Care should be taken to limit the amount of signage and information, however temporary, in order to avoid unnecessary cluttering and detracting from a high quality frontage. Some such signs will require planning permission – please check with Development Management.



The Duke of Wellington, on High Bridge, features a traditional timber frontage.



The Gosforth Hotel is an excellent example of a historic pub frontage, complete with original signage in ceramic tiling.



Historic signage in the leaded windows at the County Hotel, Gosforth High Street.

## 3.0 General principles of shopfront design

### 3.1 Traditional shopfronts

#### 3.1.1 Component parts

The individual components of a traditional shopfront are shown on the diagram on page 12. While this may not look exactly like your shopfront, and probably won't be an exact 'template' for your new design, the individual components shown can be found on most traditional and contemporary shopfronts.

The text below is numbered to match the diagram.

1. The **cornice** marks the division between the shop and the upper floors of the building, and projects out from the wall.



Detail showing a projecting cornice with the fascia below and decorative capital and corbel at the end of the fascia.

2. The **fascia** covers the structural lintel above the shop window frame and is the traditional location for the shop name. Fascias should never run through several distinct elevations, even where premises are occupied by the same business. Conversely,

where two users occupy the same building the shopfronts and fascias should clearly relate to each other. Fascias generally should not occupy more than 20% of the total height of the shopfront and must never obscure first floor windows or other architectural features.

- 2a. The shop name should be displayed on the fascia, or occasionally a sub-fascia. Detailed guidance on **signage** can be found in section 3.4 of this guide.
3. A **pilaster** is a tall straight column flanking each side of the shopfront, providing visual and structural support to the fascia and differentiation between shops. On very long frontages (department stores, for example) they can also be used to give a more human scale and vertical emphasis to an otherwise horizontal element, and to highlight or emphasise doorways. These vary significantly in size and decoration, but usually provide a common rhythm and unity within the street scene and reflect the character of the host building.



The pilasters above clearly define the entrance and the outer limits of the shopfront, and feature a moulded plinth at the base.

4. The **corbel** (sometimes called the console or bracket) provides a visual stop to the length of the fascia. It typically appears as a bracket, holding up the capital, and therefore has both vertical and horizontal functions.
5. The **capital** literally caps the pilaster, forming a decorative stop to the vertical elements of the shopfront and sometimes reflects the original purpose of the property in its design and detail. The design of capitals varies greatly and can sometimes be very flamboyant.
6. Each pilaster has a **plinth** at its base, which is usually the same height as the stall riser below the shop window.
7. The **stall riser** is a long, horizontal plinth that forms the base of the shop window, supporting the cill. It also raises the glazing above street level, protecting it from damage. Stall risers may be panelled timber or natural stone, and will typically be the same height as the plinth at the base of the pilaster.
8. Shop windows vary greatly in size and design, but all are likely to feature **glazing, cills, mullions and transoms**. Glazing is crucial to provide activity and natural surveillance. It is also the traditional means of displaying goods. Appendix 1 contains examples of typical timber glazing bar and mullion designs for reference, taken from the Grainger Town Shopfront Design Guidelines SPD.
9. Some shopfronts feature **fanlights** above the main shop window, which may be leaded, stained, frosted or clear, and some open to provide ventilation. Many doorways also feature a fanlight over them, sometimes etched to show the building name or number.
10. **Doors** were traditionally recessed to provide more window space. A doorway that is flush with the building line can give a flat, weak appearance. Doors should reflect the period and character of the shopfront and building. New doorways should be accessible to all, wherever possible.



This array of stall risers and plinths on Grey Street is unusually grand, featuring sandstone and pink granite, whereas the example below, also on Grey Street is a more typical arrangement.



11. Traditionally many small shops had residential accommodation on the upper floors, and shopfronts may feature a **side door** to provide separate access.

104-108 Grey Street, below, features the original Edwardian shopfront, which is simple in terms of its framework, but features highly decorative leded lights. The strong vertical proportions of the building are clearly replicated in the shopfront.

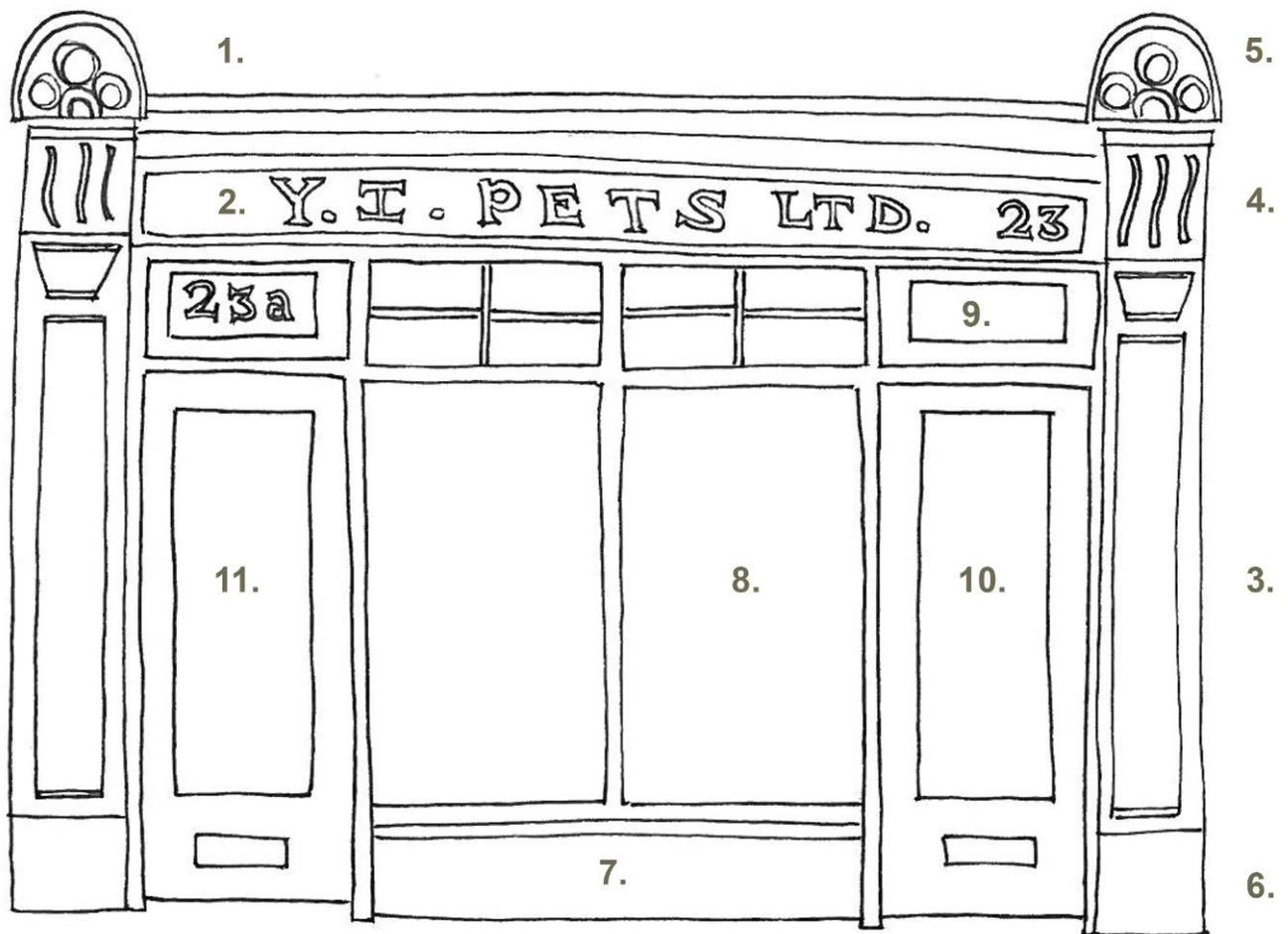
### 3.1.2 Proportions

The proportions of a shopfront should, in the first instance, be dictated by the structure and appearance of the host building. The size, style and layout of windows on the upper floors should be a strong influence on the layout of a shopfront, along with decorative architectural features such as colonnades.

It is also important that the scale of features on the shopfront match that of features on the upper floors, without dominating or obscuring them.

In addition, if there are a series of shopfronts on the street it is important that the shopfront reflects the existing, traditional rhythms set by the patterns of pilasters, stall risers and fascias.





1. Projecting cornice
2. Fascia with hand painted signage
3. Pilaster
4. Corbel, console or bracket
5. Capital
6. Plinth
7. Stall riser
8. Glazing, glazing bars, transoms and mullions
9. Fanlights
10. Recessed door
11. Side door

## 3.2 Contemporary shopfronts

The original character of some traditional shopping streets has been severely diminished by poor quality shopfronts and/or signage.

In areas of the city where there are already numerous poor quality modern replacement shopfronts, on unlisted buildings and outside conservation areas, the provision of high quality modern shopfronts will generally be given more favourable consideration than in those areas where historic shopfronts survive.

Well-designed and constructed modern shopfronts on historic buildings can make a positive contribution to the historic street scene. Such an approach, however, will normally only be considered where all evidence of the original shopfront has been lost. Where poor quality modern frontages have been installed previously, owners and retailers will be strongly encouraged to improve the quality of their frontages in accordance with these guidelines.

Fascias, for example, should be of a comparable size to and align with those of traditional shopfronts in the street so that signage is provided at a consistent level throughout the street.

There can be some distinct differences in the detailing and materials of a good quality, modern shopfront to those of a traditional design, although the general principles and proportions should remain the same.

Modern designs are generally devoid of the elaborate mouldings and architectural detailing that typifies historic shopfronts. Some do successfully incorporate some decorative features, but in general, good quality modern shopfronts are notable for their simple design.



A brand new shopfront on an historic building on Westgate Road, featuring steel pilasters (possibly as a reference to the area's industrial past) and glazing with a vertical emphasis.

### 3.3 Materials

Painted timber, which is both versatile and durable, is a traditional shopfront material and is always encouraged on historic shopfronts. Other traditional materials may include sandstone, granite and glazed or ceramic tiles. The choice of material should be appropriate to the host building and its context.

Modern, hard and glossy materials such as acrylic, perspex and uPVC are not appropriate as they typically have a poor quality appearance against the traditional materials of older buildings.

There can be slightly more flexibility in the choice of materials for modern shopfronts; timber is still preferred but other natural materials such as stone can also be appropriate. Stall risers are normally made from natural stone. Aluminium frames may occasionally be considered if they are appropriately finished and powder coated.

Large areas of glazing are a traditional feature of shopfronts and are fundamental to the advertising and display function. Where original glass remains in a shopfront it should always be retained; if absolutely necessary then a secondary glazing system may be considered.

New shopfronts can usually accommodate a wider range of glazing types, including double glazing or toughened glass. If proposing to insert new glass into historic frames, however, care must be taken to choose a type of glass that can be accommodated into the existing glazing bars and mullions without strengthening or thickening them.

### 3.4 Painting and decoration

Colour schemes for shopfronts and, where possible, signage should harmonise with the remainder of the building and the street. Strident or harsh colours and garish colour combinations should be avoided. Colour can be used to advantage to emphasise important elements of the design, and to highlight or reinforce the structural elements of the design.

Traditional timber shopfronts should be painted in a good quality semi-gloss paint, using colours that are appropriate to the age of the building or shopfront, leaving the window display to provide the light. Victorian shopfronts, for example, were typically dark reds or blues, while late Georgian shopfronts were often painted in light blue or green.

Gilding or lighter colours may be used sparingly to highlight architectural features and mouldings.

A wider range of paint finishes beyond the normal 'heritage' range may be used on modern shopfronts but garish colours should still be avoided, as should colours that clash with or detract from the materials of the host building.

## 3.5 Signage

Signage is an important part of any shopfront and most commercial buildings. It is important, however, that care is taken when specifying signage to ensure that it adequately meets the needs of the business, while also respecting the shopfront and the host building and townscape.

It is also important to remember that signage only tells part of the story – a good window display will often advertise the goods on display far more effectively than a company name can.



This simple window display indicates not only the products for sale, but also the design ethos/ branding of the company.

Companies that have existing brand equity should, realistically, have no need to use large scale signage or stick rigorously to a corporate style, as the name and logo should be sufficient to advertise their location. Many large retailers have developed “conservation” signage, for listed buildings and conservation areas, and this approach is firmly encouraged.

All businesses should take this approach to shopfronts in the historic environment, using the following guidelines.

### 3.5.1 Fascia signs

The fascia (or sub-fascia, where there is one) is the traditional and most visible location for the main business name to be located. Fascias should be integral to the shopfront design, not over-clad with a modern sign on a large backing board. Whole fascias of plastic, or internally illuminated fascias, are not appropriate or acceptable either.

Only two types of name sign are considered appropriate, regardless of whether they are to be applied to a traditional or modern shopfront. These are painted lettering or cut-out freestanding letters fixed individually to the fascia. Freestanding letters should be made from metal and should not project more than 50mm from the fascia. Hand painted lettering is generally more suitable for historic shopfronts. It should be in a traditional typeface and suitably coloured to contrast with the fascia, preferably a light colour against a dark background.

The height of lettering should be no more than two-thirds the height of the fascia and normally centred about its horizontal and vertical axis, leaving reasonable space at each end of the fascia.

Phone numbers, web addresses and opening hours should not be included on fascia signs as they are prone to change and clutter the fascia.



### 3.5.2 Signage on upper floors and commercial buildings without shopfronts

On buildings that are in commercial use but have the appearance of, say, a domestic property, the most appropriate signage is likely to be a small nameplate or cut-out lettering, provided that they are relatively discreet and of appropriate materials (such as brass or brushed steel).

Cut-out lettering can be fixed to a matrix and then onto the brick or stone work, thus minimising the level of intrusion into the historic fabric.

The size of such nameplates must be in proportion to the space in which they are to sit, preferably between the first bay and the front door. Ideally, such signs should be no more than around 0.5m<sup>2</sup>; in many cases a rectangular sign is likely to be preferable.

A minimum of one brick length should be left between the edge of the sign and any adjacent door, window or other architectural feature.

Some commercial properties contain more than one business, all of which may require signage, and careful consideration must be given to signage design in order to avoid cluttering. Collaboration between tenants is strongly recommended in order to achieve a harmonious appearance.

Large format backing boards for lettering are usually of poor appearance and are likely to unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the host building.

Businesses restricted to the upper floors of a property are likely to require window signage to advertise their location – see 3.5.5 below.



A subtle and tailored approach to signage on a bank and a former church, above.

### 3.5.3 Projecting signage

Traditionally, hanging signs were hung from a metal bracket on the side of a shopfront fascia, and often took the form of a trade symbol rather than text.

Dependent upon location, hanging or fixed projecting signs may prove acceptable, but they should follow the principles set out below.

General principles:

- There should be evidence that one has been hung in the past
- Signs should either be painted timber or other suitably high quality contemporary materials
- Only one hanging sign should feature on the principal elevations of a building. Other elevations should not feature hanging signs.
- The sign must be erected at fascia level or ground floor level where there is no shopfront
- The sign should not project more than 600mm from the face of the building
- The sign should be no more than 750mm in height
- Hanging signs should have a vertical emphasis
- No part of the sign should be less than 2.4m above pavement level
- Brackets should be metal, simple and solid – flat section “garden gate” ironwork is unlikely to be appropriate.

It is important that hanging signs form part of a shopfront and are not detached,

or found on upper floors. Buildings without shopfronts that require hanging signs must give careful consideration to location of sign, which (if found to be acceptable) should not be above ground floor level.



### 3.5.4 Banners and flags

Hanging banners are not appropriate on historic buildings or in historic areas and are firmly discouraged. They can be visually intrusive, particularly due to their typical length and positioning above ground floor. They are also often difficult to maintain and can easily become damaged and dirty, lending a negative image to a building.

### 3.5.5 Window signs

Glazing can sometimes be a useful location for signage, particularly on buildings that would suffer from signage being fixed to the masonry. Window signs should be instead of, rather than additional to, traditional signage, although it may occasionally be appropriate on shopfront glazing.

Potential ways to advertise in windows include painting or etching business names or opening hours onto the internal surface of the glass itself, placing window vinyls on the glass, hanging non-illuminated signs behind the window, or hanging blinds with adverts on. Some measures are more successful than others, and their success will generally be determined by the final design and the proposed use of the building. If the building features original glass, this should not be painted or etched.

As with the exterior of a building, care must be taken to avoid detracting from the quality of the building, and particularly to avoid cluttering windows with information, and signs should never obscure all or most of a shop window.

Please note that all these types of signage would still fall within the scope of the Advertisement Regulations and may require planning permission.



This bar uses applied window lettering instead of a fascia sign.

### 3.5.6 Free standing signs

For buildings without shopfronts, free-standing signs may occasionally prove to be an acceptable alternative to fixing signage to the host building; these should ideally be located within a lightwell or front garden area, and must be of a limited size, restricted to one per property and of a suitably simple design using materials such as brushed steel or wrought iron.

It is likely that this approach will be most appropriate for non-traditional commercial units with limited signage opportunities, or for unusual sites with, say, a frontage that doesn't present itself directly to the street, or is significantly set back.

Properties that accommodate more than one business will not be allowed additional freestanding signs; all adverts should be incorporated onto one sign.



Above: this restaurant is in a converted church (so signs on the building are restricted) and is also set back from the road.

Free-standing 'A-board' advertisements should not be used in front of businesses unless they are within the grounds or forecourt. Such signs are generally discouraged within the historic environment as they can have a detrimental impact upon the streetscene.

## 3.6 Canopies and awnings

Some historic shopfronts would originally have featured retractable canopies and there is often evidence of the mechanisms within the shopfront even when the canopy itself is long since lost.

Where there is such evidence, and where it would be appropriate to add or reinstate a canopy over a shopfront, only traditional canvas awnings will be considered, and they should be designed as an integral part of the shopfront with extreme care taken to avoid obscuring any architectural details. The 'Dutch canopy' style (a fixed or rigid canopy, often made from shiny plastic) will not be permitted.

When open, canopies must be no less than 2400mm above the pavement and at least 100mm in from the kerb, in the interests of highway and pedestrian safety.



Traditional canopies on an ornate historic shopfront on Pilgrim Street.

## 3.7 Illumination

### 3.7.1 Illumination of signage and exteriors

Illumination should only be used where absolutely necessary, and should be low key and carefully integrated into the design of the shopfront. Care must also be taken to complement any existing architectural lighting schemes, and to avoid conflicting with lighting within the shop window and display.

No type of shopfront sign should be internally illuminated.

The types of illumination which may be considered appropriate are:

- White halo illumination behind freestanding letters, provided it does not result in an increased projection for the signage.
- For hanging signs, discreet, matt black light fittings attached to the bracket or sign itself.
- Miniaturised spotlights fixed to the ground below (where there is a garden or private forecourt) or discreetly located on the building without causing damage to it may alternatively be used to illuminate signs or, on larger buildings, architectural features.

These methods of lighting ensure that the source of the lighting is discreet and integrated into the shopfront. Cable runs on the surface of a building should always be avoided as they can have a significantly negative effect upon its appearance.

Trough and neon lighting will be discouraged as they are not appropriate on historic buildings.



Architectural lighting on this building illuminates the signage without detracting from the building.



Neon signs are not appropriate on historic buildings or in historic areas – they can appear garish and obtrusive.

### 3.7.2 Illumination of window displays

An attractively lit window display can have an extremely positive impact on the appearance, vitality and security of streets in the evenings and should be given consideration when designing a shopfront.

Retailers are encouraged to appropriately illuminate shop windows well into the evening, avoiding harsh fluorescent lighting and taking account of sustainability and cost issues by using energy efficient lighting.

## 3.8 Security

It is generally recognised that it is necessary to secure commercial premises when they are not open, but in recent decades security measures have been extremely damaging to the street scene.

Solid external roller shutters, in particular, detract significantly from the appearance of any host building, and can fully obscure a shopfront. They can also have a deadening appearance in the street scene when lowered.

Security measures should cause no significant harm to the appearance and character of the building or streetscape.

Security glass (which is laminated or toughened) can be an appropriate option for a shopfront, except where the glazing is original, in which case it should be retained.

Internal perforated lattice grilles behind the shop window are a good alternative to roller shutters, as when they are closed passers-by can view the window display, plus the grilles still allow light to spill out on to the street and avoid the deadening effect of external shutters.

Some forms of external shutter may be acceptable, provided that there is evidence of them historically, they respect and do not obscure the architectural elements of the shopfront, and they can be removed completely when the business is open. Traditionally, timber shutters were used for this purpose.

If a completely new shopfront is being designed then security measures should be considered from the outset and fully integrated into the new design.

Alarm boxes can be a successful deterrent, but only one should be fixed to each property, of as discreet a size and material as possible, and should be located above the ground floor in an unobtrusive position.

### 3.9 Access

Easy access to shops and circulation within them is important to everyone, including people who use wheelchairs, those who cannot walk easily, people who are deaf, people who are blind or visually impaired and to the elderly, children and people with pushchairs and prams.

New shop entrances should accommodate the needs of all shoppers and business users, without detriment to the character and appearance of the host building and street.

Level access should be provided if possible to accommodate the needs of people with limited mobility, as well as people with pushchairs, and doors should be wide enough for wheelchair access (typically a clear opening width of 900mm).

Some historic shopfronts will not be able to accommodate this without detriment to their character and appearance, so innovative solutions need to be sought.

## 4.0 Contacts for further information

You may also be interested in the other guides in this series:

- Living in a conservation area: a guide for residents
- Repair and maintenance of traditional buildings
- Conservation Area Profiles

These are available from the council's conservation team and the council website [www.newcastle.gov.uk/hes](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/hes)

For information on **grade II\* and grade I listed buildings** in Newcastle, contact:

### **Peter Derham**

County Historic Buildings Officer:

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## Other organisations

The National Heritage List for England

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/protection/process/national-heritage-list-for-england>

Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record

[www.twsitelines.info](http://www.twsitelines.info)

Heritage Gateway

[www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

Newcastle Heritage Partnership

[www.heritagepartnership.org.uk](http://www.heritagepartnership.org.uk)

English Heritage

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk) and

[www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)

Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings

[www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk)

Institute for Historic Building Conservation

[www.ihbc.org.uk](http://www.ihbc.org.uk)

English Historic Towns Forum

[www.historictownsforum.org](http://www.historictownsforum.org)

Historic Scotland

[www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk)

## Contacts:

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