

Shopfronts in Greenwich Town Centre



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The aim of this leaflet is to provide guidance for the design of shopfronts in Greenwich Town Centre in view of its special character and location within the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site and West Greenwich Conservation Area. The term 'shopfronts' relates not only to retail outlets, but also non-retail uses such as banks, building societies, estate agents and restaurants.

General Principles

The Council will use the following design principles when assessing proposals for new shopfronts:

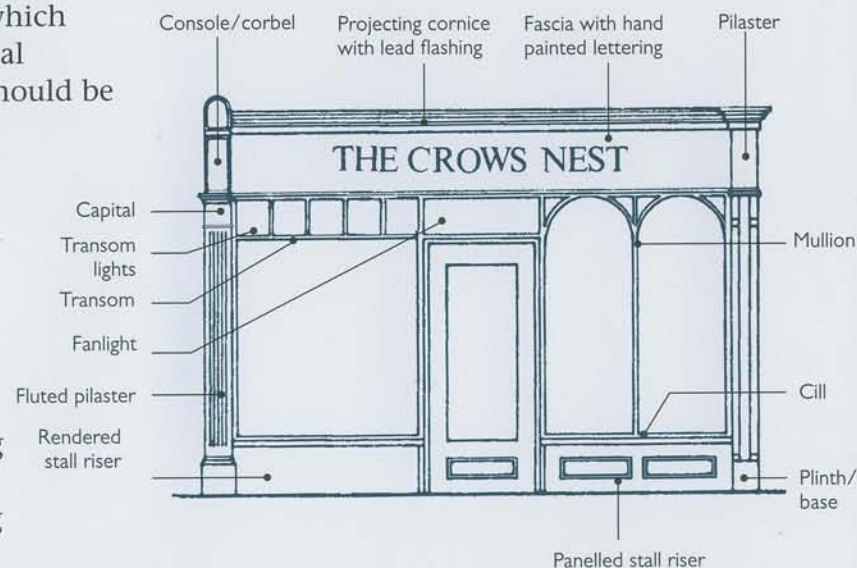
- Consent will not normally be granted where original architectural features are to be removed or concealed.
- The character, scale, proportions and detailing of the building above and properties adjacent must be respected.
- The corporate designs of multiple shops should be restrained to respect the individuality of buildings, and the policies in this leaflet.
- Where a retail unit is proposed which includes more than one individual building or façade, shop fronts should be individually designed for each façade with some form of separation between fascia boards etc. The identity of multiple units can be retained through a unified approach to colour and lettering, etc.
- Thoughtfully designed 'modern' shopfronts are acceptable as long as they respect the architecture and materials of the surrounding buildings.

Traditional Shopfront Features

Original features are an important element in retaining the character of a shopfront. Whenever these are still in evidence, they should be retained and enhanced as far as possible.

The major elements of traditional shopfronts often found in Greenwich Town Centre are shown below. Whenever replacement shopfronts are proposed, the reintroduction of these traditional elements will be encouraged to reflect the period of the building concerned.

▼ Traditional shopfront features



Poor Shopfront Design

In general, proposals for new shopfronts, which do not conform to the Council's criteria will be unacceptable.

Ill-considered designs not only spoil the character of the immediate building, but also detract from the wider character of the town centre. The main points to consider are shown below:

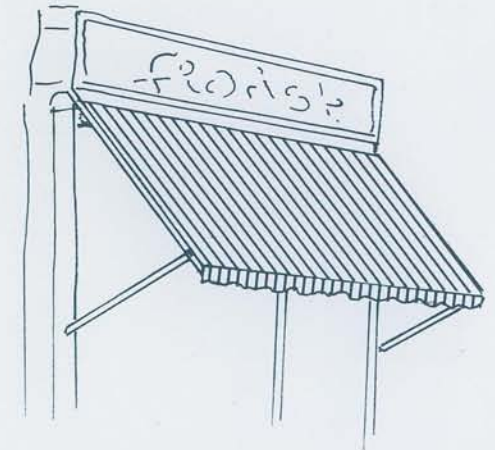
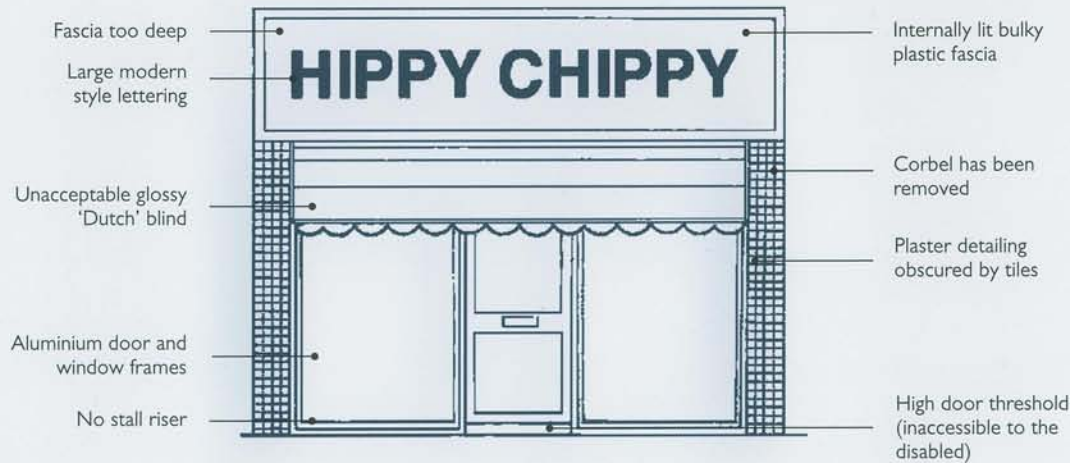
Security Shutters

It is acknowledge that when installing a new shopfront, the issue of security has to be considered. However in Greenwich this should be handled in a manner which respects the special character of the buildings. Solid security shutters on the exterior of shopfronts create a blank frontage, which is undesirable. They often feature external shutter boxes, which spoil the appearance of the shopfront. These sort of shutters will not normally be an acceptable solution. It is preferable if fine mesh grilles are used, internally mounted, or even the more traditional removable shutters.

Canopies and Blinds

Blinds are often required to protect window displays from sunlight. Where these are installed they should be retractable so that they do not obscure the shop fascia. In Greenwich the traditional canvas type is most appropriate. The blind should retract into a box, which is designed as an integral part of the shopfront. If an existing box is available, it should be retained and refurbished. The use of glossy, plastic 'Dutch' blinds is not acceptable.

▼ Poorly designed shopfront



Access for Disabled People

The ability of disabled people to gain access to shops is often complicated by narrow doorways, high door thresholds or steps. Where traditional shopfronts are concerned, it is not always easy to adapt these for the needs of disabled people without changing the character. However the needs of disabled people should be taken into account as far as it is practicable.

New shopfronts should accommodate the needs of disabled people. The main issues to consider are that doors should be of adequate width and capable of being opened by disabled people. Steps should be avoided and difference in level overcome by ramping. Internal lobbies should give adequate space for people to manoeuvre wheelchairs.

Greenwich Town Centre Article 4(I)

Direction

The painting of commercial buildings in the town centre now requires formal planning permission from the Council. So, when an existing shopfront is to be repainted it will first be necessary to make a planning application. The Council has produced a comprehensive Colour Guidance Note to assist applicants and copies may be obtained from the address below.

Permissions

Alterations to shopfronts normally require consent under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, and Advertisement Regulations. It might also be necessary to obtain consent in terms of the Building Regulations. Listed building consent is required for the removal or alteration to any listed building, including shopfronts.

Planning permission is required for any material alteration to the exterior appearance of a shop. This could include changing materials, installing blinds, and security grilles, or changing the size of the windows, etc. Advertisement consent is required to display most signs.

In a Conservation Area such as Greenwich, consent is required for the demolition of any part of the building. This would include removal of a shopfront or any features.

For advice or clarification of any matters relating to shopfront design, please contact the address below.

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