



# Detailed Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document



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## DETAILED DESIGN GUIDANCE NOTE: SHOP FRONTS

### 1. Introduction

**1.1** This Guidance Note sets out the approach to creating good shop fronts in the National Park. It covers aspects such as design, signage and lighting. The Note is intended for use by retailers, developers and designers – anyone in fact who is repairing, replacing and designing commercial properties. For the purpose of this guide, a “shop” includes such non-retail premises as banks, building societies, betting offices, restaurants and estate agents.

**1.2** Information on planning policies, planning permission, listed building consent and advertisement consent is given in Section 9 at the end of this document.

**1.3** The following topics are covered:

- Overview of shop front design from traditional to modern
- Analysis of the main components in a traditional shop front
- Design recommendations for existing and new shop fronts
- Detailing
- Signage
- Security
- Policy and permissions
- Other commercial property.

### 2. Overview of Shop Front Design

**2.1** Shop fronts are an important feature of the National Park’s larger settlements. Their appearance has a direct impact on the character of the area. While their primary function is to display goods for sale, they also play a role in projecting the image of the shop. If shop fronts are well cared for and retain their historic features - or in the case of new shop fronts, if they have been designed sympathetically - they will be a positive asset to the area in both visual and economic terms. If windows are the eyes of a building, then shop fronts are the eyes of the street. They are, after all, designed to attract attention, often to the exclusion of the building’s upper floors.

**2.2** The earliest surviving shop fronts in the National Park date from the late 18th century and have small paned windows (often a bay or a bow) with thin glazing bars, modest fascias and a centrally-placed door related to the symmetry of the windows above. The result is a delicately detailed shop front within a visually pleasing composition.



1 Early shop front, (King Street), Bakewell



2 Shop front incorporating early details, Baslow (opposite Church on Main Rd)

**2.3** The advent of plate glass in the 19th century led to larger windows with less subdivision. The windows were framed at the sides by pilasters, at the base by a stall riser, and above by a fascia capped by a cornice. This fascia became more dominant, often incorporating a retractable roller blind. While the shop front was set on the face of the building, the entrance door became deeply recessed.



3 C19 shop front, Bakewell (Matlock Street)

**2.4** Later shop fronts, from the Edwardian or Inter-war period, often incorporated strong architectural motifs typical of those eras, as well as materials such as glazed tile. The trend towards ever-larger windows continued, particularly from the mid 20th century onwards when greater structural freedom meant that glazing could extend, apparently unsupported, over an entire frontage. Fascias tended to become deeper, no longer angled downwards as previously, but flat to the wall. Materials used included aluminium, Perspex and upvc.



4 & 5 Early C20 shop incorporating Art Nouveau style detailing, Baslow (opposite lynch gate to church and old bridge on main Road)



6 (left) Former Hancock's Store, Bamford, an early C20 shop on two floors.

7 (above) The shop in the early C20 (photo from 'Walking Tour of Bamford' leaflet produced by Bamford District History Group)

**2.5** More often than not, however, particularly within the village context, shops began as part of dwellings and did not have purpose-designed shop fronts. A normal sized domestic opening became the shop window and a wall-mounted sign took the role of fascia.



8 Butcher's shop, East bank, Winster (photo from 'Winster: A Village remembers')

This pattern can still be found in village stores in the National Park.



9 & 10 Hulme End Village Stores

**2.6** The next logical step was to enlarge

the size of the window but keep it basically the same design - a small paned window within gritstone surrounds.



11 Shop, Hartington (Hall Bank)

2.7. Substituting a timber surround incorporating the traditional shop front elements of side pilasters and top cornice while still retaining the stone sill, became the other design option.



12 Shop front from 1911, Parwich, now sadly no longer a shop

**2.8** Parades of shops are rare due to the size and nature of the National Park's settlements. Even in the larger settlements, shops are often separated by houses or, if contiguous, are constructed at different times in varying styles and materials.

**2.9** The increasing dominance of supermarkets has led to the closure of many local shops and their reversion or conversion to domestic use. Often this involves infilling the shop front, thereby losing all trace of the shop's former presence. It is possible however to retain the shop front while accommodating domestic use within.



13 Former shop, now a B&B, (Church Street) Youlgreave

**2.10** Elsewhere the urge to modernise, as well as the pressure for corporate identity and national style, has meant that original shop fronts have been radically altered. The commonest problem with replacement shop fronts from the modern era is that they have been designed in isolation from the rest of the elevation or from original shop fronts nearby. Too often, the vertical rhythm generated by the traditionally narrow width of shop front was disregarded. At their worst, such shop fronts tended to downgrade the quality of the street or area. Fortunately there is now greater awareness of the need to both retain and strengthen the character of traditional shop fronts and to design new ones which, though contemporary, respect and harmonise with that tradition.

### **3. Main Components of a Traditional Shop Front**

**3.1** The overall appearance and proportion of the traditional shop front is vertical rather than horizontal. The key components in this are the **pilasters** which give definition to the sides of the shop front; the vertical **glazing bars** which subdivide the glazing; and the **entrance door**. These are balanced by the horizontal emphasis provided by the **fascia** above, and the **stall riser** below the glazing. **End consoles** immediately above the pilasters and **corbels** on top of the pilasters provide a visual stop to either end of the fascia. **Entrance doors** are inset giving extra display area and shelter from the elements.



14. Main Components of a Traditional Shop Front

**3.2** The **Changeable Area** of a shop front is that framed by the fascia and the side pilasters. Alterations can be made more easily inside this area. Depending on the building, however, there may be constraints on how much of a change can be made, and in cases where the existing shop front is of high intrinsic quality, no changes may be possible without harming its character.

### **4. Design Recommendations**

#### **Restoring shop fronts**

**4.1** Original shop fronts which have been taken out and replaced by shop fronts of less sympathetic design should wherever possible be returned to something more appropriate in appearance and character. Quite often this will involve returning the proportions of the shop front to one that balances the horizontal emphasis of the shop fascia with the vertical elements of side pilasters and glazing supports. If photos of the previous arrangement are not available and it is obviously not one of a row of similar properties, then the best conjectural arrangement should be drawn up based on surviving shop fronts of a similar age and style of building. Often too, original details may have been concealed by later alterations. Restoring these details is a good way of improving the appearance of both the shop front and the area.



**4.2** Excessively long shop fronts should be reconfigured to break them down into more traditional unit lengths. Excessively deep fascias should be removed; the window area subdivided to the correct proportions; and any entrance door flush with the window should be inset to give much needed depth to the composition. Pilasters, consoles and, if necessary, stall risers should all be reinstated. Inappropriate, over-sized signage should be removed.



15 & 16 Enhancement: before (left) and after (right), shops, Bakewell (Matlock Street)



**4.3** Separate entrance doors serving upper floor accommodation should be retained or reinstated as this will help to sustain a mix of uses in the centres.



**4.4** Where original shop fittings survive internally – for instance counters or shelving, these should be retained as important features.

17 (left) Interior fittings, former bakery, Youlgreave (Church Street)

## Creating New Shop Fronts

**4.5** If the new shop front is within an **existing building**, the height of the shop window and depth of the fascia should relate to the elevations above. It is critical, for instance, that the shop front does not start to dominate or conceal the first floor windows. Ideally there should be an area of exposed walling above the fascia and below the first floor window sills. There should also be a vertical area of exposed walling between adjacent shop fronts. The aim should be to achieve a satisfying architectural relationship between ground and upper floors, and between adjoining buildings.

**4.6** The detailing of the surround to the shop window and the degree of subdivision in the window should relate to the age and style of the building. The aim, however, is not to create a fake, original shop front complete with all period details, but a reinterpretation of the type of shop front there might have been in a building of that age.



18 (left) Replacement shop front, Youlgreave (Church Street)

4.7 That approach, however, is not suitable for certain types of building. Workshops or outbuildings, for instance, have their own character and if converted into shops it would look quite wrong to add a traditional shop front or a reinterpretation of one. Here the design and detailing should take their cue from the original building and the new 'shop front' be treated as a simple, modern intervention.



19 (left) Restaurant within a former storage building, Bakewell (opp. New Street)

4.8 If the building in question is listed, it may not be possible to add or enlarge an opening to create a new shop window. In such cases, the shop front may consist of nothing more than the existing door and windows together with signage. It may be possible, however, to form a new shop front within the building itself, with the entrance door being pinned back during opening hours to reveal what is in effect a lobby area with the shop itself being accessed through an inner door.



20 (left) Shop within an historic building, Castleton (Cross Street) Here, the 'shop window' is formed by display cases within an internal lobby

**4.9** Within **new developments**, shop fronts can take a whole range of forms. Proportionally, though, they need to relate to the design of the building, which in turn must relate to its context. The number one rule is that the new shop front should be appropriate in design terms to the style of the building within which it sits.

### Contemporary Design

**4.10** The Authority's Design Guide discourages pastiche solutions which are crude or inappropriate copies of traditional designs, or indeed authentic historical re-creations in the wrong context. This pitfall is especially the case in shop front design. The unimaginative solution of copying the form (but not the spirit) of traditional designs too often results in ill-proportioned, heavily sectioned and crudely detailed shop fronts with none of the grace of earlier examples. In these situations, a contemporary design is the better approach, one that takes its cue in terms of character – simple or severe, elaborate or intricate – from the building as a whole. Here, the quality of detailing is paramount. It must be as crisp and well-executed as possible, with each component as much worth looking at as the shop front as a whole.



21 (left) New shop front, Bakewell (corner of Matlock Street and Granby Road)



22(right) Contemporary design in an extension to a shop at the rear of a listed building, Bakewell (clothes shop in former Skidmores shop by pelican crossing, Matlock Street)

## Sustainability

**4.11** Making the new development as environmentally sustainable as possible is equally important. The National Park Authority will expect to see this issue fully addressed in relation to design, detailing, construction and servicing/running costs. Technological advances have, throughout the centuries, generated new design solutions. Adaptations to mitigate the effects of climate change, both now and in the future, are likely to have a similar impact particularly in respect of heat loss and solar shading. (See the Authority's Supplementary Planning Document for Climate Change and Sustainable Building for more information 2013.)

## 5. Detailing

**5.1** The **detailing** will dictate how delicate and refined, or how heavy and crude, the shop front looks. Though the following relates to traditional shop fronts, the principles are applicable to contemporary designs. Without a thorough knowledge of how shop fronts were detailed in the past, it is impossible to create something of equal value today in terms of visual interest and quality.

**5.2 Fascia and pilasters** are the features which 'frame' the shop front. The fascia should not be over-dominant. The height is normally 600mm from the top of the fascia to the top of the window frame, though traditionally it was nearer 400mm. The fascia should not extend uninterrupted across a number of adjacent buildings, even if the shop occupies several units. Each separate architectural entity requires its own individual shop front, though adjoining shop fronts can obviously be given a coordinated appearance when viewed together.

**5.3** The **fascia** should be angled, and finished at the top with a moulding or projecting cornice in timber. This provides a definite 'top' to the fascia (it will look weak without it) and helps shed rain from the face. On traditional shop fronts, the box which housed the retractable shop blind formed the cornice. **Pilasters** are based on Classical architecture and are in essence flat columns. Each pilaster has a base or plinth; the column or shaft (which can be plain, panelled or fluted); and a moulded capital or capping piece. Consoles or panelled areas should be moulded or routed and where appropriate given properly detailed, fielded panels.



23-25 (above) Fascia, pilaster and plinth details often have Classical precedence

26 (left) This Hathersage shop front has elaborately detailed stone pilasters

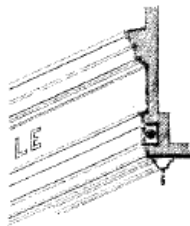
**5.4** Where a false ceiling has been added inside the shop, simply extending the fascia downwards to cover the ceiling void is not an appropriate solution. Other methods should be used to conceal this element, such as setting back the false ceiling behind a splayed bulkhead. Internally illuminated or plastic fascias are not appropriate within the National Park.

**5.5** Painted timber is the preferred choice of **material** for the shop front. It can be easily moulded or routed to add detail and visual relief to fascias, pilasters or large areas of panelling. The use of non-traditional materials, particularly those with a high reflective sheen such as glass fibre, Perspex, upvc and acrylic will not normally be supported. Non-sustainable tropical hardwoods should also be avoided.

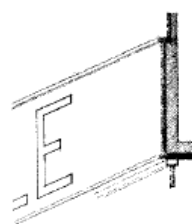


27 (left) Elaborate fluted console above pilasters

28 (above) Simple entablature in timber supported on timber consoles



29 (above) The entablature comprises the cornice, the frieze and the architrave. It may also house a box designed to contain a completely retracted awning. The Sketch below illustrates a traditional entablature in cross section. The overall height of the entablature should not exceed 750 mm



30 (above) In some unsatisfactory entablatures, as shown in the sketch below, the frieze and advertising matter are allowed to dominate, with the cornice and architrave being reduced to insignificance

**5.6 Stall risers** are there to protect the glazing from kicks and damage. They should usually be between 470mm and 650mm high. Traditionally these were of stone, later of rendered brickwork painted to match the rest of the shop front. Timber is not a suitable material from either the practical or visual point of view. The top should be finished with a moulded projecting sill, angled to shed water. This forms a strong visual base to the glass.



31 (above left) In this very simple Castleton shop front, the wall itself forms the stall riser

32 (above) Ashlar gritstone as stall riser



33 (left) Rendered and painted stall riser; early C20 subdivision with stained glass detailing above transom. Note the classical capitals to the column-style pilasters. Former shop, now a house, Tideswell

**5.7 Shop windows**, where subdivided, should have well-detailed glazing bars. These should be as slender as possible and in timber. Chamfered, rounded or moulded sections should be used and with the tops and bottoms of the glazing bar terminating in a square section post or stooling.



34 (left) Gritstone stall riser beneath simple subdivided window, Longnor  
35 (right) Delicately detailed glazing bar and transom (Baslow, Art Nouveau)

Occasionally, the glazing will incorporate a high level **transom** – a horizontal glazing bar defining an upper zone to the window. Such features add to the interest and delicacy of the design. At all costs, avoid blanking off windows by means of internally fixed panels, or through the use of posters advertising special offers etc. Equally unwelcome are internally applied logos and corporate colours that blank off the whole window. All of these lead to a loss of interest and character in the street scene. Where it is no longer practical to use a shop window for normal displays, longer term displays set back from the glass should be considered. Where even these are impractical, using the space for community displays or a map of the area can add interest and variety.

**5.8 Doors** should reflect the design features of the main shop front. Ideally they should be recessed, at either the centre of the shop front or to one side. This gives visual depth and interest to the elevation, as well as increasing the display area. The width of the door and how it operates should be designed to comply fully with disability access requirements. (The recessed door is useful in this respect, allowing space to accommodate a change of floor level.)



Various surfacing patterns and materials can be used for this recessed area. The surfacing however should be non-slip and thresholds flush, giving level access from the pavement. Historically this area was sometimes gated off at night. Internally, counters and **accessibility** should be compliant with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements.

36(left) Recessed door in C19 shop front



**5.9** While the door itself can be fully or partly glazed, a properly detailed lower timber panel reflecting the height of a stall riser will give a unified appearance to the shop front. Any panelling should be traditionally detailed. The application of stick-on mouldings onto flat plywood or blockboard does not give an authentic appearance. The door head should coincide with any horizontal transom to the shop window, giving the opportunity to create a **fanlight** over the door.

37 (left) Fanlight over entrance door, here used for discreet signing

**5.10 Decoration** should not jar with the character of the building or area. Colours should be chosen to respect neighbouring properties. Sometimes, especially in the case of listed buildings, traditional paint finishes of the period should be used. Lurid colours should be avoided. Bright white or high gloss finishes will not look as effective as softer tones and finishes. Rich dark colours were often used traditionally. Primary colours can look more elegant if black is added, effectively toning down their garishness. Many high quality schemes have minimalist or monotone colour combinations based on warm, muted tones. Painted timber is always preferred

to stained or varnished woods, although opaque stains (which look like paint) are a possible alternative.

**5.11 Blinds** are a traditional feature providing shading to shop displays. Existing canvas blinds and blind boxes are valuable features which should be repaired and retained. New blinds should be capable of being retracted into a recessed area and be of traditional materials, with a matt finish to the blind itself. Dutch blinds, although retractable, do not fit within a blind box and are therefore inappropriate.



38 Projecting cornice incorporating traditional blind box



39 Original blind mechanism still in place

**5.12 Canopies** and plastic awnings, especially if non-retractable, are not in keeping in historic areas and obscure the architectural features of a building. They should be avoided. They should not be used merely to draw attention to the shop front or as a means of advertising.

**5.13 Ventilation** to the shop should ideally be natural rather than mechanical. This relies on adequate grilles set into panelling, stall risers or over the main window. If an opening window is needed the best location is within a fanlight over the door.

## **6. Signage**



**6.1** The size and positioning of **signs** on the face of a building can greatly affect its appearance. Less is generally more, in terms of impact. A proliferation of signs tends to be self-defeating. One sign, normally mounted on the fascia, is sufficient. This can however be supplemented by a well-designed projecting or hanging sign depending on the character of the street.

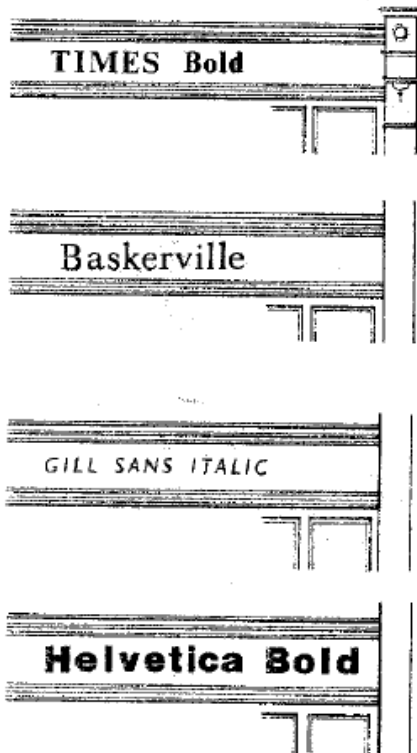
40 (left) Simple, understated signage within an attractively painted shop front

**6.2 Corporate image**, involving the use of standardised design, material and colours is generally inappropriate within the National Park and will be discouraged. Designs may have to be modified to suit a particular building or location. Otherwise they are likely to look out of place, particularly within the National Park's conservation areas.

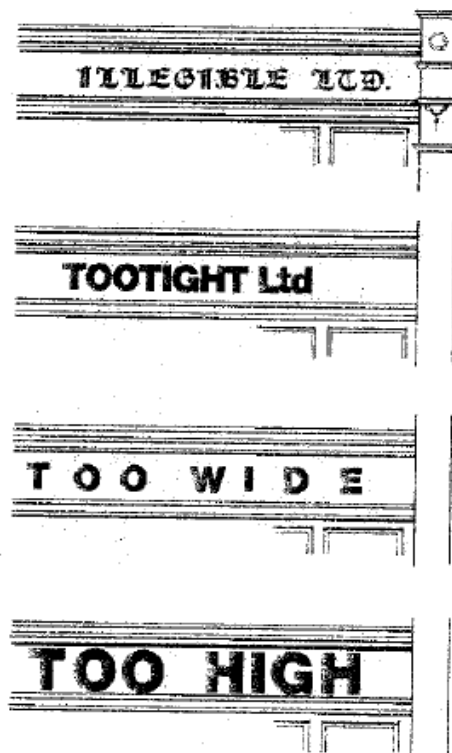


**6.3** Generally speaking, the **signable area** of a shop front is restricted to the entire shop front including the fascia and the window area, together with immediately adjacent areas of walling. Existing architectural features such as windows and banding courses should not be compromised.

**6.4** Traditional painted lettering is encouraged. Wherever possible, **script** style and size should complement the period of the building and the space available. Traditionally, light lettering was used on dark backgrounds, with gilt or silver lettering selected for their reflective qualities. As a general guide, the height of lettering should not exceed 60% of the fascia height leaving 20% for spacing above and below. The length of wording should not exceed 75% of the fascia length.



41. Examples of good style and size of lettering



42. Examples of poor styles and sizes of lettering

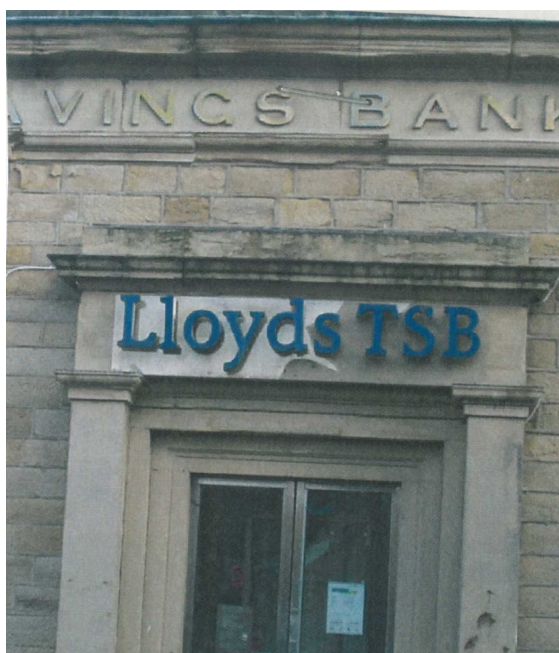
**6.5** If no fascia is available, it is possible to add signage to the window or door. **Wall-mounted signs** or applied lettering are other possibilities. The former should be modest in size and always complement the scale of the building.



43 (left) Modest signage over entrance to a gallery, Tideswell (opposite church)

44 (above) Applied letters onto stone fascia (Matlock Street, Bakewell)

Timber or metal can be used effectively, but plastic or Perspex should be avoided. The same advice on materials relates to **applied lettering**. With these, however, there can be an issue over fixing. Where the individual letters are separately fixed to the wall it is essential that the fixing points are within the joints in the stonework rather than to the stonework itself. With premises sometimes changing ownership and therefore name with frequent regularity, the effect on stonework of the multiple fixing of letters is both disfiguring and damaging. For this reason it is sometimes best to apply the letters to transparent Perspex backing sheet, thereby reducing the number of fixing points to those required for the sheet itself.



45(above) Applied letters mounted onto a transparent backing sheet to facilitate fixing (Bath Street, Bakewell)



46 (above right) Signage within the entrance door recess (Buxton Road, Bakewell)

47(right) Attractive signage applied to window (Bridge Street, Bakewell – now gone!)



**6.6** Where businesses occupy **upper floors** unconnected with a ground floor shop, and where permission is required, the use of lettering applied to upper floor windows will be supported provided it is restrained - gold, black, or a dark or recessive colour for example rather than white or a bright, prominent colour – and generally no more than 100mm in height. Similarly where permission is required a business name plate beside the ground floor entrance door will also be supported provided it is of a modest size and non-illuminated.



48 Signage on the shop window itself



49 Signage on former shop, Youlgreave (now a Youth Hostel)



50 & 51 Business nameplates beside entrance doors

**6.7 Hanging signs** can play an important role in both attracting customers and adding interest to the street scene. They can be varied in format but should avoid being bulky and generally should not exceed 650mm x 650mm otherwise they can dominate the shop front. Materials should be



as advised for wall signs in 6.5 above. They should be positioned at first floor level so as to avoid obscuring either the fascia or any architectural features. Where original wall brackets survive, they should be reused. New brackets should be of traditional scale and materials. To harmonise successfully there should not be more than one hanging sign per shop front. It is generally inappropriate for an upper floor business to have its own hanging sign.

52 (left) Minimal signage – hanging sign and wall-mounted boards



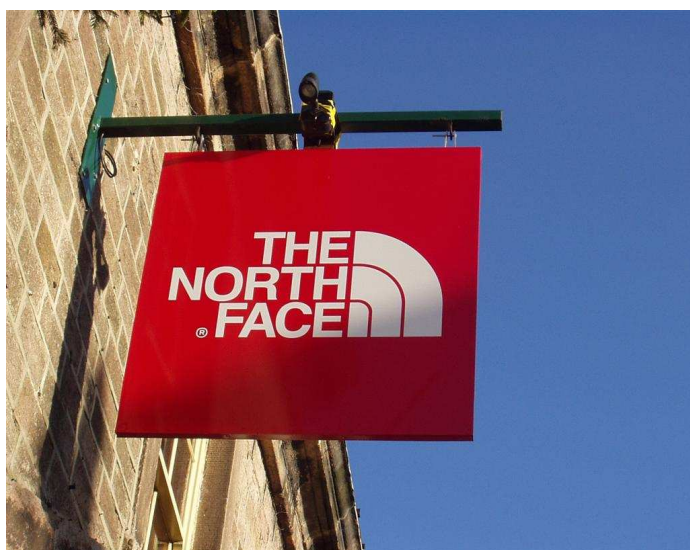
**6.8** Whether fixing sign boards, individual letters or hanging signs to a wall, the same advice applies – always fix into joints rather than into stonework.

53 (left) Minimal signage for commercial premises without a shop front



**6.9 Displays** on footpaths or highways should be restricted to the recognised forecourt area in front of a shop, and otherwise avoided altogether. Advertisement boards should be placed in accordance with guidance produced by the PDNPA working alongside the Bakewell Town Council, and the Highway Authority.

54 (above) This shop in Castleton relies only on hanging sign for signage



**6.10 Lighting** should be used sparingly, if at all in order to promote dark skies and to protect the historic character of villages. It should also be low energy lighting. The expectation is that within most settlements with well-lit streets, additional external lighting to individual shop fronts is unnecessary. In places like Bakewell and arguably Hathersage and Castleton, night time lighting can be a positive attribute to the street scene, public safety and to support the evening economy. Late-opening premises such as public houses and restaurants will need some form of lighting to show they are open. Where such lighting is necessary it should be limited and as unobtrusive as possible.

55 (above) Discreet lighting on a hanging sign

Floodlighting, horizontal strip or trough lighting as well as swan-neck spotlights (especially the brass variety) should all be avoided. Any lighting should ideally be concealed, for instance an appropriately designed cornice could contain down-lighting to a fascia. The bracket for a hanging sign could perform a similar function. Where cable runs have to be externally mounted, they should be as unobtrusive as possible and painted to blend with the background.

## 7. Security

**7.1** External metal security blinds are not in general acceptable within historic areas or on historic buildings. Their impact on both building and street is extremely damaging (particularly the solid type of roller shutter) and results in an unattractive and hostile-looking environment.

**7.2** More acceptable methods of securing the shop front include:

- Laminated security glass (ordinary toughened glass breaks too easily)
- A mesh security screen inside the display window, which allows views in at night
- A robust stall riser to discourage ram-raiding.

**7.3** Internal mesh security screens should have a matt finish, ideally coloured to match the shop front itself. They should always be detailed as an integral part of the overall design. Where original or traditional, demountable, external wooden shutters survive; they should be retained and used. This solution, suitably re-interpreted for the 21st century, might also be considered for new shop fronts.



56 (above) Permanent bars fitted inside the window (King Street, Bakewell)

## 8. Policy & Permissions

**8.1** All material changes to shop fronts require planning permission, however there may be some minor changes which do not, so it is advisable to check with the National Park Authority. As shop fronts have a marked visual impact on the character of settlements, high standards of design are expected. Nonetheless, this is an opportunity for owners to make the most of a building's character, recognising the strong intrinsic attractiveness of traditional towns and villages in the area. As all of the National Park is an area of Special Control for Advertisements, this means that strict controls apply to shops and other signage. The relevant policies are currently Local Plan Policies LC4, LC5, LC6 and LC11. This plan is scheduled for replacement in 2016, but for the issues covered in this guidance the same or similar policies will apply. Please check on the Authority's website or contact the Authority if you are unsure.

**8.2** Please note that some shops are listed buildings and as such listed building consent is required for external or internal alterations, as well as for advertisements and items such as external light fittings.

## 9. Other Commercial Property

**9.1** The same principles on design and signage apply to hot food take-aways, restaurants and public houses. The type and amount of signage, plus associated lighting typically applied for on these types of property can be a problem. Signage should be based on the minimum requirement, particularly when an historic building is involved. In such cases the elevations should not be overwhelmed by signage nor the special character of the building compromised. Rather, a minimalist, subservient approach should be adopted with signage appropriate to the

building in terms of size and location rather than a standardised solution being imposed. This also applies to any curtilage features that may be of interest such as walls and outbuildings associated with the property. Lighting should be of the low-energy variety.

**9.2** The advice given in Section 5 above on how signage should be detailed, fixed and illuminated applies equally well to hot food take-aways, restaurants and public houses.

## **REFERENCES**

'Details and Good Practice in Shop Front Design': English Historic Towns Forum, 1993.  
'Retail Development in Historic Areas': English Heritage; EHTF; Planning Advisory Service, 2005

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Alnwick District Society for the Signage diagram in 5.5 and 6.4, taken from Alnwick District Council's: 'Design Guide for Shop Fronts' 1995.  
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City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council for the Illustration at 3.1 taken from City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council Local Development Framework: Shopfront Design Guide October 2007