

KNOWSLEY

Shopfront and Signage Design
Supplementary Planning Document
June 2023



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1. Introduction

The Role of the Supplementary Planning Document

- 1.1.** This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council to support and provide additional guidance for the national and local planning policies (such as the Local Plan) that relate to the design of and alteration to shopfronts and signage. This SPD complements the Design Quality in New Development SPD which provides the overarching design guidance for Knowsley and applies to all new development affecting shopfronts and associated signage within the borough including changes of use.
- 1.2.** The status of this document as an SPD means that it is a `material consideration` in planning decisions. It provides guidance on how proposals for alterations to existing shopfronts and the erection of new shopfronts and the display of signage can achieve good design that is appropriate to its context.
- 1.3.** The full range of documents comprising the Local Plan is available online at <http://www.knowsley.gov.uk/localplan>.

2. Policy Context

National Planning Policy

- 2.1** The content of this SPD has been guided by planning policy at national and local level as set out below. The SPD guides applicants applying for planning permission and advertisement consent in understanding how Knowsley interprets this policy for individual development proposals relating to alterations to existing shopfronts and the erection of new shopfronts and signage.
- 2.2** National government planning policy for England is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In July 2021, a revised version of the NPPF was released by the government. This can be viewed at www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2 .
- 2.3** The NPPF places design quality at the forefront of the national agenda for planning as the following paragraphs demonstrate:

“The creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process”.

(NPPF para.126)

“Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:

- a) will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;*
- b) are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping;*
- c) are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation or change (such as increased densities);*
- d) establish or maintain a strong sense of place, using the arrangement of streets, spaces, building types and materials to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit;*
- e) optimise the potential of the site to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount of mix of development (including green and other public space) and support local facilities and transport networks; and*
- f) create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users,*

and were crime and disorder, and fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience”.

(NPPF para.130)

“Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes. Conversely, significant weight should be given to:

- a) *development which reflects local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes; and/or*
- b) *outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings”.*

(NPPF para.134)

“The quality and character of places can suffer when advertisements are poorly sited and designed. A separate consent process within the planning system controls the display of advertisements, which should be operated in a way which is simple, efficient and effective. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety, taking account of cumulative impacts”.

(NPPF para.136)

2.4 National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) complements the NPPF in providing guidance on the practices of good design and the tools available to achieve it. The NPPG is a ‘live’ on-line document. Its guidance is subject to periodic update. The NPPG was originally published in 2014 and updated in 2019 and can be found at:

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/>

Local Planning Policy

2.5 Knowsley’s development plan is set out in several different planning policy documents which together make up the ‘statutory development plan’.

2.6 The Local Plan includes a ‘Policies Map’ and a ‘Local Plan Core Strategy’, which sets out a vision, key objectives and strategic planning policies, as well as a range of other documents including ‘Supplementary Planning Documents’. The Council’s Local Plan: Core Strategy was adopted in January 2016. This SPD complements the Local Plan and is consistent with policies set out in it the Local Plan Core Strategy, particularly:

- CS2: Development Principles;
- CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development; and
- CS20: Managing the Borough’s Historic Environment.

Appendix 3 of this SPD lists these policies in full.

2.7 The diagram below indicates how the design requirements of the Local Plan policies are translated to a range of different SPDs and best practice guidance.

<p>Overarching Design Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase connectivity and accessibility • Tackle crime and antisocial behavior • Reduce carbon emissions and waste • Protect and enhance green spaces / increase leisure opportunities • Improve the quality of the built environment • Strengthen community cohesion • Improve the quality of shopping and the leisure / evening economy • Encourage employment generating development • Creation of a healthy promoting environment.
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Local Plan Core Strategy Key Design Principles	
Select locations that reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and enable people as far as possible to meet their needs locally (CS2)	Include safe convenient routes of movement with priority for walking, cycling and public transport to meet the access needs for users, particularly less mobile people (CS19)
Recognise environmental limits, protect, and enhance environmental assets, enhance local character, and promote quality of place (CS2)	Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment, and density (CS19)
Maximise opportunities for regeneration of previously developed land, including derelict or unsightly areas to improve the image of Knowsley (CS2)	Maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, whilst minimising crime, fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.
Make the most efficient use of available resources and infrastructure (CS2)	Integrate effectively with existing development and link to existing shopping and service provision (CS19)
Sustain and promote biodiversity, whilst preserving the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes (CS8)	Address the challenges of climate change and future changes in social, economic, and environmental priorities (CS19)
Consider the provision of landmark buildings and additional detailing at and adjacent to main gateways, movement corridors, town centres and strategic regeneration opportunities (CS19)	Create spaces and places as a focal point, accommodating social interactions and active lifestyles, including high quality public realm and open spaces, public art and landscaping which promotes biodiversity (CS19)



Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance	
Design Quality in New Development SPD	Development Specific SPDS
Getting the movement framework right	Householder Development SPD
Promoting a positive image	New Residential Development SPD
Placing buildings	Shopfront and Signage Design SPD
Mixing uses	Trees and Development SPD
Density and form	
Landscape and public realm	
Sustainability in design	
Designing out crime	
Built heritage and conservation	
The importance of local assessment	

- 2.8** This SPD also supports “saved” policies from the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (UDP), adopted by the Council in 2006. The relevant "saved" policies of the UDP include, S9: Shopfronts and Security Shutters, S10: Advertisements and DQ2: Security in the Built Environment that relate to shopfront design and security. This SPD complements these UDP saved policies until they are replaced as part of the Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy.
- 2.9** This SPD will help applicants interpret and implement these policies when developing their proposals.

3. Planning Application Process

Design

- 3.1** Since 2006 planning legislation has required planning applicants to include a design and access statement with many types of planning application. Design and access statements explain the thinking behind a proposed design. Detailed guidance on the documentation required when submitting planning applications, including details of when a design and access statement is necessary, is available on the Council's website at <https://www.knowsley.gov.uk/validationchecklist>.

Based on the National Planning Practice Guidance, the following applications must be accompanied with a design and access statement:

- Applications for major development, as defined in article 2 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure (England) Order 2015;
 - Applications for development in a World Heritage Site or a Conservation Area, where the proposed development consists of:
 - one or more dwellings; or
 - a building or buildings with a floor space of 100 square meters or more.
 - Applications for listed building consent.
- 3.2** Appendix 5 of this SPD contains a Design Checklist. This checklist enables applicants and their representatives to quickly reference how their proposals respond to the considerations set out in the SPD. This checklist could be submitted along with any relevant planning application or listed building consent to enable applicant's to clearly demonstrate that their proposals comply with the SPD or explain why they do not.

When is Planning Permission required?

- 3.3** The installation of a new shopfront requires planning permission. Depending on the nature of the works, planning permission (and potentially a building regulations approval) may also be required to alter a shopfront. Further guidance on whether works to a shopfront will need permission is summarised in Appendix 2 of this SPD.

Any alterations to listed buildings which go beyond "like for like" repair and general maintenance requires listed building consent under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990¹, in addition to any planning permission that may be required. It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building without the required listed building consent. Therefore, any proposed works to a listed building should be discussed with the planning department. Further

¹ [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) Act 1990 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

guidance on the proposed works which are likely to require listed building consent is summarised in Appendix 2 of this SPD.

Change of use to residential

3.4 A permitted development right (Class MA) was introduced and came into effect on the 1st August 2021 enabling the change of use from a commercial, business and service use (Use Class E) to a residential use (Use Class C3), subject to a `prior approval` process. The prior approval process is in effect a fast tracked process which means that the principle of the change of use is acceptable and only allows the Council to assess certain specified matters including:

- Transport and highway impacts;
- Whether adequate natural light is provided; and
- The impacts of noise from commercial premises on the occupants of the dwelling.

The permitted development right means that to be eligible for the prior approval process, premises must meet the following criteria:

- The building must have been vacant for a minimum of three months immediately before the date of the application for prior approval;
- The use of the building must have been in a commercial, business and service use (Use Class E) for a minimum of two years before the date of the application for prior approval;
- The cumulative floor space of the existing building changing use under Class MA must not be more than 1,500 square meters;
- Class MA applies to Conservation Areas, but not in other land listed in Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the General Permitted Development Order².

Consent to display an advertisement

3.5 The erection and display of advertisements is subject to a separate consent process within the planning system. The relevant legislation is The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007³. It requires local planning authorities when considering applications for consent to display an advertisement to only have regard for `amenity` and `public safety`. Where new or replacement signage is proposed, advertisement consent may be required, depending on the nature of the new or replacement signs. Further guidance on when advertisement consent is required is summarised in Appendix 2 of this SPD.

² [The Town and Country Planning \(General Permitted Development etc.\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Order 2021](#)

³ [The Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007 No 783](#)

Additionally, it is always advisable to obtain preapplication advice from Knowsley Council regarding advertisement consent.

- 3.6** Advertisements displayed on listed buildings in most cases will constitute an alteration to the building and therefore listed building consent will be necessary in addition to any advertisement consent.

Further Advice and Contacts

- 3.7** Further national guidance that relates to shopfront design and the display of signage is listed in Appendix 3 of this SPD. Advice on forms, fees, how to complete forms and who to contact at Knowsley Council regarding planning, building control and advertisement applications is also provided in Appendix 4 of this SPD.

4. The Importance of Good Shopfront Design

- 4.1** The Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy aims to ensure that the borough’s retail centres⁴ are vibrant and welcoming focal points where people choose to shop or use other facilities and services. The design of new or replacement shopfronts and signage plays an important role in achieving these aims of the Local Plan: Core Strategy.
- 4.2** Well-designed shopfronts and signage are important to perceptions of both the business behind the shopfront and the place the shopfront or signage is in. For the business the shopfront and its signage give potential customers an indication of the quality of the goods and services on offer. If it is well-proportioned, well-designed and harmonious with its surroundings, the shopfront and associated signage are more likely to make a positive first impression.
- 4.3** Retail centres are natural community focal points. The appearance of the shops and their signage contributes to an immediate impression about the character of the retail centre or place it is in. Brash colours, oversized or over-lit signage or shops hidden behind solid shutters in most cases will all make a place feel less welcoming and less attractive. The focal points of a retail centre should be its most pleasant and attractive places. If they are not, they can give a strong impression that the retail centre is not a pleasant place to be.
- 4.4** Nationally, problems have been experienced with the quality of shopfront and signage design. Shopping areas can be frequently blighted by bland, poorly designed shopfronts; poor quality externally mounted solid roller shutters; and overbearing signs. Retail centres continue to face increasing competition from edge-of- and out-of-town shopping, plus the rise of internet shopping and home delivery as well as the more recent challenges of the Covid pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, it has become even more important for retail centres to be attractive and pleasant places. This applies equally to traditional or historic shopping areas and town centres or shopping precincts that date from more recent times.
- 4.5** Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development of the Local Plan: Core Strategy seeks to:
- enhance local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places;
 - minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour; and
 - ensure that new development responds to and integrates positive characteristics of immediate surroundings.
- 4.6** Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development complements the design principles of Policy CS2: Development Principles that include “understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of places” and “promoting good quality design”.

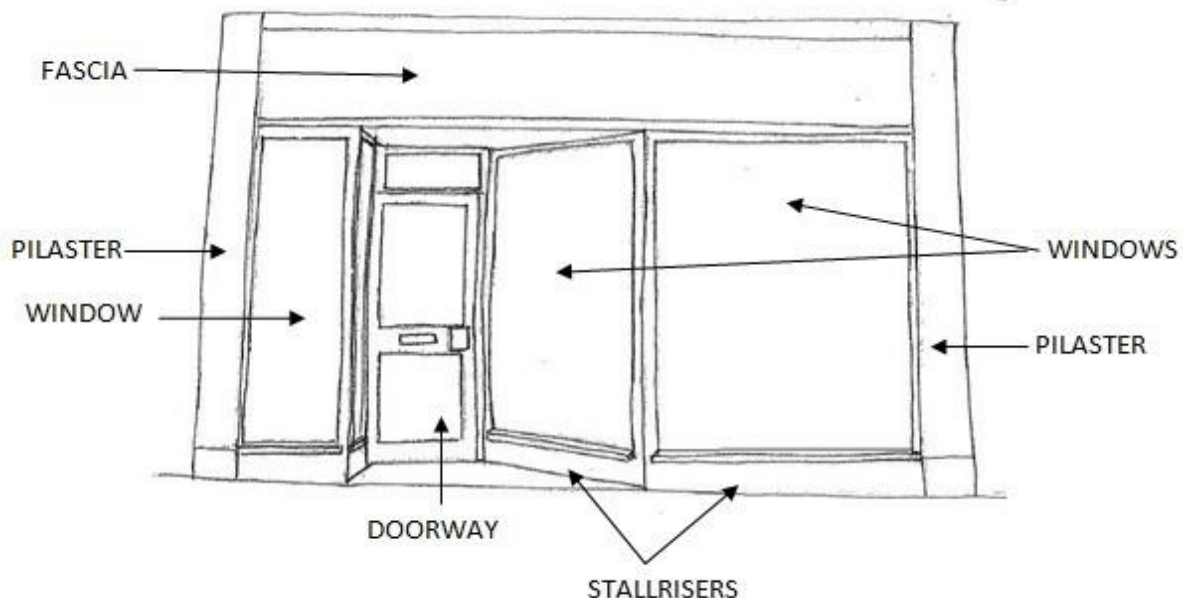
⁴ For the purposes of this SPD, throughout the document the term `retail centres` will be used when referring to: town, district and major and medium local centres, or local shopping centres / parades.

- 4.7** The Knowsley Replacement UDP includes specific saved policies on shopfront design (Policy S9) and advertisements (Policy S10).

5. Shopfront Components and Proportions

- 5.1** Regardless of their age or style, shopfronts are likely to incorporate similar basic features. Each shopfront should form a well-proportioned composition that relates well to the building and the wider street scene in order to satisfy Local Plan Policy CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development. Under this policy there is no 'one size fits all' solution to shopfront design. However, each shopfront and its signage must respond to its context or surroundings, and itself to be of high-quality design.

Basic Shopfront Components



- 5.2** The basic components of a shopfront are listed below. Getting the proportions of the different basic components of a shopfront right is more important than small details or decoration. The fascia, pilasters, window(s), doorway, and stallrisers are the basic ingredients of the shopfront. If they are out of proportion with each other, the overall design will never look right, even if care is given to the details and materials of the shopfront. The main components of a shopfront are:

- **FASCIA:** this is the horizontal band at or near the top of the shopfront where the main sign is usually located. The scale and design of the fascia should be appropriate to the character, and period of the building and complement the overall street scene. The fascia should not exceed 20% of the overall height of the shopfront from top to bottom, otherwise it will look out of proportion with the rest of the shopfront, making the windows below look squashed, and the overall design too top-heavy. For these reasons a fascia should be no deeper than 400mm but will frequently need to be much shallower than this to stay in proportion with the rest of the shopfront. The fascia should not be wider than the rest of the shopfront.
- **PILASTERS:** these are the vertical columns that 'frame' the left and right hand edges of the shopfront. The pilasters provide a vertical division between

shopfronts. Pilasters can also be found either side of the shop doorway or between windows. They should generally be 150mm to 200mm wide, but where the shopfront is particularly large, they can be as much as 300mm wide. Pilasters which are along the left and right hand edges of the shopfront should either extend the full height of the shopfront or should appear to support the fascia or cornice if one is present.

- **WINDOW(S):** the window(s) should be the dominant feature of the shop front. They should account for most of its height and in most cases the majority of its width. It is key that the windows, in particular the largest panes of glass, have a vertical emphasis by being noticeably taller than they are wide. This means that shop windows may require mullions to divide up the glass and achieve vertical proportions. Without vertical proportions, the windows (and the shopfront as a whole) can look squashed and dumpy. The window frames and mullions should be as slender and discrete as possible to maximise views of window displays and the inside of the shop.
- **DOORWAY:** the way into the shop should be clearly indicated and designed to be accessible for all, for example for prams, for the less mobile, wheelchair users and those who are visually impaired, in accordance with current standards of Volume 2 of Part M of the Building Regulations⁵. Where there are changes in level between the pavement and shop floor, recessing the door would allow for the insertion of a ramp or steps, and would emphasise the door as well as provide a textural contrast to highlight the change from pavement to shop floor. The door should include glazing that is in proportion with the windows of the shopfront. Doors without glazing are rarely acceptable. Permanent and visible manifestations could be used on fully glazed doors to provide a contrast to the background, so the door is not hazardous to the visually impaired. Glazing or additional signage could be accommodated between the head of the door and the underside of the fascia. The design of the doorway should ideally reflect the style and character of the shopfront and building.
- **STALLRISER(S):** The stallriser is the low section of wall below the shop window. Stallrisers should generally not be higher than 20% of the overall height of the shopfront unless the shop has a particularly high internal floor level. Extending the window down to a very low level is normally impractical from a safety and security perspective.
- **DEPTH AND SHADOW:** a shopfront can look very bland if all the features (windows, door, stallriser, fascia sign, and pilasters) are all flush with each other, giving the entire shopfront a flat face. By recessing doors and windows and bringing pilasters, windowsills, and the cornice (where one is present) slightly forward, a simple design will instantly look more interesting, creating a more attractive shop frontage. Slightly projecting pilasters and a tough projecting shop windowsill are also practical, as they protect the doors and windows from knocks. Similarly, a strongly projecting cornice over the fascia will shelter the sign and any lighting from rain.

⁵ [Approved Document M vol 2.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

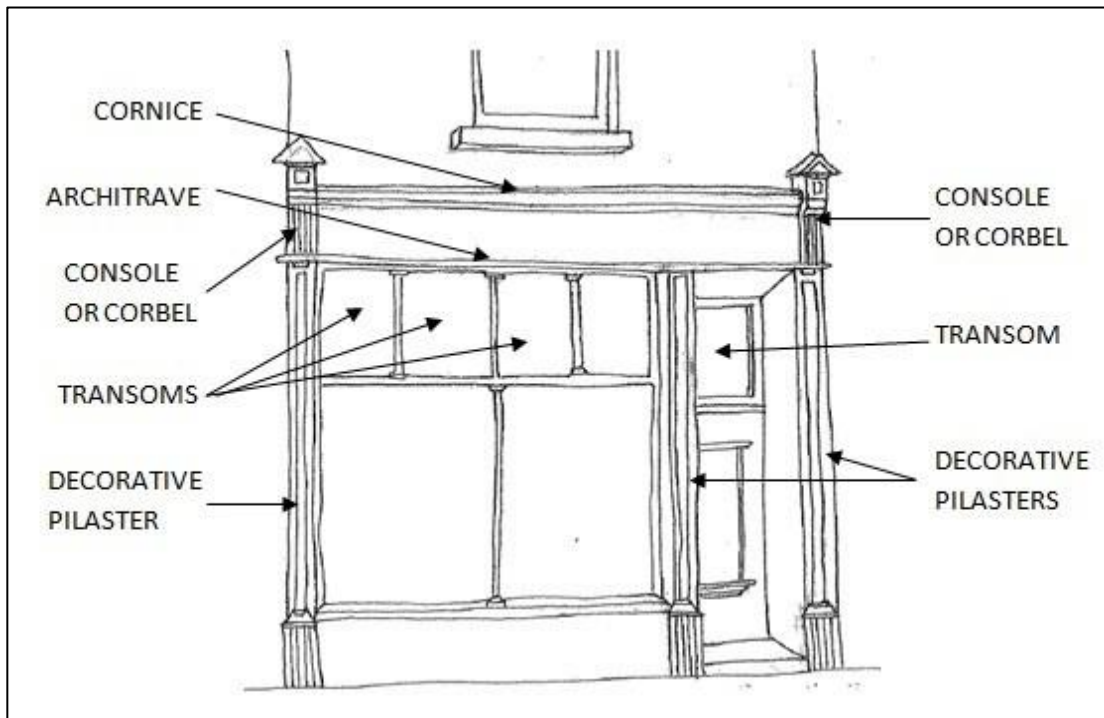
Guidance: Basic shopfront components

1. Unless the architecture of the building indicates otherwise, the design of all new or altered shopfronts will be expected to:

- a) Include as a minimum a fascia, pilasters, stallriser(s), dominant shop windows, and prominent doorways;**
- b) Ensure accessibility for prams, the less mobile, wheelchair users and the visually impaired in accordance with current standards;**
- c) Ensure that the fascia and stallriser depth are each no more than 20% of the total height of the shopfront.**
- d) Ensure glazing retains a vertical proportion by being clearly taller than it is wide and;**
- e) Incorporate recessed and/or projecting features to give depth and shadow. Shopfronts where all the features are flush, or near-flush will inevitably appear bland**

Other Shopfront Components

5.3 While all of the basic shopfront components should be present in any shop front design, depending on the character of the building or area the following components should be added to the basic components listed above. Many of the details would be applicable in conservation areas or on historic buildings.



- **CORNICE:** This is the top edge and highest part of the shopfront. Cornices project further out than the wall above and provide shelter to the fascia and the shopfront as a whole. They are often the furthest protruding part of the shopfront. Depending on the architecture of the building the profile of a cornice can be square, simply moulded or richly moulded. They are often not found in Huyton and Kirkby town centres because of the modern styles of the buildings and there being projecting canopies over many of the shops in these town centres.
- **ARCHITRAVE:** This is a shallow, slightly projecting band along the bottom edge of the fascia. It should be far shallower and simpler than the cornice. The architrave provides a clear bottom edge to the fascia and helps to 'frame' the signage.
- **CONSOLE OR CORBEL:** These are sometimes found on the left and right hand edges of a fascia. The consoles or corbels are shaped brackets that offer support to the cornice above. They should line up with the pilasters along the left and right hand edges of the shopfront and should be roughly the same width as the pilaster. Consoles and corbels are usually only found on traditional buildings.
- **TRANSOMS:** Where shop windows are particularly large or tall, or where there needs to be an opening window on the shopfront for ventilation, there is sometimes a row of smaller panes just below fascia level. This row of

smaller panes is called transom. Transoms can also be found between the head of the shop door and the underside of the fascia. Transoms only tend

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- **DECORATIVE PILASTERS:** In most cases the pilaster can be a simple strip along the left and right hand edges of the shopfront. For more decorative or traditional style shopfronts, the pilaster can be divided into three parts: a 'foot' that projects slightly forward and is no taller than the stall riser, a 'shaft' that runs from the window sill to the head of the window, and a capital. A capital is a moulding or detail connecting the pilaster to the feature above it.

Guidance: Other Shopfront Components

1. To accord with the Local Plan: Core Strategy Policy CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the design of all new or altered shopfronts at historic buildings or within conservation areas, will be expected to:

- a) **Include additional features where appropriate, such as a cornice, architrave, consoles or corbels, transoms and decorative pilasters;**
- b) **Maintain a traditional format and proportions of shopfront details; and**
- c) **Retain in situ existing shopfront components, features or details that contribute to the building's historic or architectural significance.**

- 5.4** As outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the fascia should be no more than 20% of the overall height of the shopfront, and similarly the stallriser should be no more than 20% of the overall height of the shopfront. In many cases the fascia and stallriser(s) may need to be even shallower.
- 5.5** This leaves at least 60% of the height of the shopfront to be taken up by the windows and their frames. The window panes themselves should be noticeably taller than they are wide and so may need mullions to give a vertical proportion.
- 5.6** Where the shopfront has extra features or details (compared to the normal basic components of a shopfront) these extra features should line up with each other where practical. For example, the bottom edge of the glazing of the shop door should roughly line up with the shop window sills. Corbels or consoles should be the same depth as the fascia. The transom over the shop door should usually line through with the transoms over the shop window (if these are present).
- 5.7** In some cases the structure or internal layout of the building can place limitations or constraints on the design of the shopfront. In these cases, the design of the shopfront should respond positively to these constraints while still incorporating basic shopfront details in aesthetically pleasing proportions.

6. Shopfront Style

- 6.1** The aim of this SPD is not to make every shopfront look the same or look like they are all from a particular time in history. The intention is to encourage high quality design that is mindful of its context, which includes the building the shopfront forms part of, and the general character of the area. These are the requirements of policies CS2:Development Principles, CS19:Design Quality and Accessibility and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment of the Local Plan: Core Strategy and saved policies of the Knowsley Replacement UDP, Policy S9: Shop Fronts and Security Shutters.
- 6.2** Across the borough, shops occupy buildings dating from the 1600s through to the 2010s. While Huyton Village and Kirkby town centre mainly consist of post-1945 modern-style buildings, Prescott's shops are in a mixture of Georgian, Victorian, Edwardian and Art Deco buildings. The design of the shopfront must respond to the architectural style and the overall character of the building it is attached to, so that it is a coherent part of the building.
- 6.3** Generally the design and detailing of the shopfront should make it look the same age as the rest of the building. If the building is traditional (for example Victorian or Georgian), the shopfront design could look like it is from this era or respond to a later phase of the building's history.
- 6.4** Where a single building incorporates several shop units or there is a terrace or parade of identical units, the design of the shopfronts should match with each other as far as is practical to reinforce the original design or character of the building and shopfronts.
- 6.5** Where differently designed buildings or buildings of different styles or eras stand side by side, the use of different shopfront designs is encouraged.

Guidance: Shopfront Style

- 1. To comply with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the design of all new or altered shopfronts will be expected to:**
 - a) **Respond positively to the design or architecture of the building they are attached to;**
 - b) **Respond positively to the context provided by the wider terrace, parade, street or area;**
 - c) **Promote uniformity where shops are in uniform pairs, terraces or parades; and**
 - d) **Promote a diversity of style in areas where the buildings themselves are in a range of architectural styles or date from different eras.**

7. Materials

- 7.1** Generally, shopfronts on 'traditional' (pre-1945) buildings are made of painted timber. A small minority of these traditional shopfronts have stone stallrisers or pilasters and fewer still have traditional cast iron columns, tiling or steel framed windows. On this basis, on historic buildings or in conservation areas the use of any material other than painted timber would in almost all cases be difficult to justify.
- 7.2** In the case of buildings constructed after 1945, steel and aluminium windows and doors set in bare brick, concrete or rendered pilasters and stallrisers became the standard shopfront materials. This is still the case today. Virtually all of Huyton Village and Kirkby town centre were built after 1945. In most cases modern shop front materials like aluminium, steel, barebrick and concrete will be acceptable in post 1945 or modern shopping precincts or parades.
- 7.3** UPVC is highly unlikely to be an acceptable shopfront material because uPVC frames cannot be made as thin as aluminium, steel or timber, giving the shopfront a chunky, clumsy appearance, particularly if there are opening windows. Glossy surfaces, acrylic or Perspex sheeting and uPVC shopfronts are generally not acceptable in traditional buildings, conservation areas or listed buildings. Where uPVC may be allowed (e.g., on an appropriate modern building or to replace an existing poor-quality shopfront) it will only normally be appropriate for the windows frames themselves. The fascia and the stallriser should not be in uPVC. UPVC 'mock' traditional doors should always be avoided.
- 7.4** The tradition of tiled shopfronts from the interesting architectural tiles of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, has changed to plain flat tiles more suited to a bathroom floor than an external wall. Tiling will only be acceptable where it is part of a high-quality shop design that relates well to the architecture of the rest of the building.
- 7.5** A shopfront is only as good as the materials it is made of. If poor quality, fast grown softwood is used, it will quickly soak up rainwater, warp or crack, giving the shopfront an untidy appearance and requiring more maintenance or complete renewal. Slow grown softwood such as Douglas fir has far greater resistance to rot and warping than fast grown softwoods. In the same vein, uPVC or extruded plastic is prone to fading and discolouring and cannot be repaired. It can soon go from looking fresh and new to tired and untidy.



Aluminium framing and glass have been used in a creative manner to provide a bespoke contemporary shop front on a 1960s building

7.6 With modern materials like concrete and powder coated aluminium it is easy for a shopfront to look very basic, even stark and ugly. Thought should be given to using these materials creatively to give the shopfront a bespoke, rather than off-the-shelf appearance. For example, depending on the specification, aluminium frames can be sleek and discrete or square and chunky. Many shop fitters and suppliers of signs, lights, doors and windows pride themselves on being able to handle bespoke commissions.

Guidance: Shopfront Materials

1. To accord with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the design of all new or altered shopfronts will be expected to:
 - a) Be constructed of timber in most cases where the building is located in a conservation area or is an historic building;
 - b) In post-1945 buildings and in modern shopfront design, use materials like steel, aluminium, timber, brick or render in a bespoke rather than 'off the peg' manner;
 - c) Use materials that respond positively to the materials and design of the rest of the building; and
 - d) Use a choice of materials which considers longevity, sustainability and the ability to repair or replace components that break or fail.



In traditional buildings, shopfronts should be made of timber in most instances. Good quality timber will last much longer than fast grown softwood.

8. Shopfront Colours

- 8.1** The choice of finishes and colours of shopfronts can have a big impact on their overall appearance and the character of the street. Each shop should have its own identity, but this should not be at the expense of the overall visual harmony of the street scene.
- 8.2** Colour should be limited to the shopfront itself, including the window frames, door, pilasters, fascia and other shopfront features. Brick, stone, tiling or render should not be painted or otherwise covered over to match the shopfront's colour scheme.
- 8.3** The colours of a shopfront should have a coherent, co-ordinated appearance. In most cases, but particularly in historic areas or 'gateway' locations the use of vivid, garish or strongly contrasting colours should be avoided in the interests of amenity and respecting the character of the place. Dark or muted colours are preferable.



Left Image: co-ordinated shopfront and signage colours using a mixture of dark, light and mid-tones.



Right Image: The use of black and silver signage and a black shopfront is a sympathetic match for this new black and white building.

- 8.4** Corporate colour schemes that are based on bright colours should be altered or muted to suit the appearance of the shopfront and/or the character of the building, parade, street or area the shop is in.
- 8.5** Higher quality shopfronts tend to use two or three colours only. These are typically a dark or muted 'background' colour and two other lighter colours to pick out details like the signage or window frames. The colours used on the signage should match or harmonise with those used on the shopfront.

- 8.6** The contrast between the lettering and background colour should be considered to ensure the lettering is visible in all light, including streetlights. Light coloured lettering on a dark background works best and is more easily seen by those with a visual impairment.

Guidance: Shopfront Colours

- 1. To accord with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the following is expected with regard to shopfront colours and finishes**
 - a) Colours should be applied to the shopfront itself and not to surrounding brickwork, stonework or render, to avoid the shopfront dominating the building;**
 - b) Vivid, garish or highly contrasting colour schemes should be avoided in order to respect amenity and to avoid the shopfront dominating the building, terrace, or parade;**
 - c) The co-ordinated, coherent use of two or three shopfront colours is supported provided the rest of the criteria of 1 are met; and**
 - d) Corporate colour schemes should be altered or muted to suit certain locations like conservation areas or 'gateway' locations or other locations where amenity and townscape are of particular importance.**

9 Signage

- 9.1** The best looking signs on shops are designed as an integral part of the overall shopfront instead of being ‘tacked on’ to the shopfront and have a coordinated appearance. When designing new shopfronts or altering existing ones, thought should be given to how the shop signs can complement the overall appearance of the shopfront and the street scene.
- 9.2** Inappropriate signage can clutter buildings and detract from the overall street scene. In most cases signage should be limited to the fascia of the shopfront, the shop windows and, where appropriate, hanging signs. Sign boards above the fascia level will be unacceptable. In most cases hanging signs should be no higher than the shopfront. Fascia signs to gable ends or side walls will be unacceptable unless the shopfront also wraps around the corner.
- 9.3** All signage should be of materials and colours that match or complement the design and colours of the existing shopfront. Different types of signage (e.g. fascia signs, hanging or projecting signs and signage on the glass of the shop window should have a coordinated appearance. Corporate colour schemes should be adapted to suit the building or the existing street scene.



Left image: simple signage that clearly states the business name and owner without dominating the building.

Right image: Inappropriate, out of scale signage that cuts the building elevation in two. The use of bright colours exacerbates the impact of the sign.

- 9.4** Many modern buildings are simply detailed and have many flat surfaces. The lack of constraints makes it easy for large and out of proportion signs to be erected on building elevations or for more signs to be put up. With modern buildings in particular, restraint is needed to make sure that signage is of a scale and proportion that does not dominate the building.
- 9.5** There are now more signage options than ever before with the rise of adhesive graphics and high-quality sign printing. Unfortunately, this technology can sometimes be used to create signs that are either cluttered with different logos, lettering and font styles, or the signs (or shop windows) become 'mini billboards' with large photo quality graphics. When these types of signs are displayed, they can harm amenity and the character of the area. The impact can be worse when several neighbouring businesses cover the outside of their premises with information about their products and services. While the Council has no objection in principle to high quality printed signage, these signs should not be out of scale or proportion or look overly 'busy' due to the use of lots of colours, text, logos or graphics.
- 9.6** A-boards are not permitted on the public highway (pavement) as they constitute an obstruction. The Council has legal powers to remove such obstructions and recover the cost in doing so from the owners.

Guidance: Signage

- 1. To comply with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the following is expected regarding shopfront signage:**
 - a) Signage should be limited to the fascia and, where acceptable, the shop windows and hanging signs, and signage above fascia level, on the sides of buildings will not be acceptable in most cases;**
 - b) Signage should be both in scale with the rest of the shopfront and building elevation;**
 - c) Signage should be kept to a minimum and not clutter the elevation by virtue of the number of signs and/or their positions;**
 - d) The use of 'busy' signs with a proliferation of logos, graphics, lettering styles and font sizes will not be acceptable;**
 - e) The cumulative impact of signage on a building, terrace, parade, street or area will be taken into consideration by the Council; and**
 - f) Surviving historic signage should normally be retained, even when no longer relevant to the current occupier of the building, unless it is within the fascia where it would interfere with the current retail operation.**

Fascia Signs

- 9.7** A fascia sign is usually the main sign on a shopfront and is usually the largest single sign. There can sometime be a temptation by the business owner to make this sign as deep and as wide as possible to maximise its visual impact. The unfortunate impact is that the fascia ends up being badly out of scale and proportion with the rest of the shopfront and the building. Where several shops have oversized fascias there is a particularly harmful impact on the amenity of the area and the character and appearance of the street scene. Therefore, the Council will only approve fascia signage that is in scale and proportion with the rest of the shopfront and the wider elevation of the building.
- 9.8** Once the scale and proportion of the fascia is established, the next consideration should be the size and layout of the lettering and logos. The temptation can again be to fill the fascia with large lettering and logos. However, this often gives the fascia a crammed, busy appearance that detracts from the character or appearance of the building. Therefore, the fascia sign should be limited to the name of the shop with a simple graphic logo and the street number. Generally, there should be a comfortable blank 'breathing space' above and below the lettering of the fascia and to the left and right. The lettering of logos of the fascia should not extend over the pilasters.
- 9.9** Where there is a single occupier of two or more adjacent shop units, each unit should have a separate fascia: one continuous fascia would be too visually dominant in the street scene. The identity of the multiple units can be retained by a unified approach to colour and signage.
- 9.10** Fascia signs should sit comfortably within the fascia and not overlap or conceal framing/architectural detail. Bulky projecting box-like fascia signs or additional flat fascia panels crudely fixed onto existing fascia boards are unacceptable in conservation areas and on listed buildings and are unlikely to be accepted elsewhere. Acrylic, plastic and other high gloss modern materials, aluminium or stainless-steel signs are not normally supported on listed buildings or in conservation areas. These fascia signs will usually only be acceptable on modern buildings, provided they can be appropriately integrated.
- 9.11** As with the rest of the shopfront, the materials and colours of the fascia sign should match or at least harmonise with those of the wider shopfront.



In the example above, this building has a simple, well-proportioned contemporary shopfront. The fascia signage is in proportion to the rest of the frontage. The aluminium framing emphasises the shop doorway and the exposed framing provides clear left and right hand edges to the shopfront next to the brick pilasters.

Guidance: Fascia Signs

- 1. To accord with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the following is expected with regard to shopfront signage:**
 - a) The fascia sign should be in proportion with the rest of the shopfront and elevation and standard sign sizes or proportions should not be imposed on a building;**
 - b) The fascia should be no more than 400mm deep, but in some cases it will need to be shallower to keep it in proportion with the shopfront or building design;**
 - c) Fascia signage should not project outwards or take the form of a box sign, and should sit as flush as possible with the external face of the building elevation;**
 - d) The lettering and logos on the fascia should fit comfortably within the fascia, not extend the full height or full width of the fascia and leave a blank 'breathing space' within the perimeter of the fascia;**
 - e) The lettering of logos on the fascia should not extend above the pilasters;**
 - f) If the shopfront has a cornice, architrave, consoles or corbels, the fascia sign should not overlap or conceal these features and the fascia should sit as flush as possible behind these features;**
 - g) The materials and colours of the fascia should match or at least harmonise with those of the rest of the shopfront;**
 - h) If the fascia is particularly shallow, individual letters or in-scale adhesive signs can be fitted to the glass of the shop window, provided the window does not become overly obscured or cluttered with signage; and**
 - i) Where fitting a fascia board is unsuitable due to the design of the building (for example if the business occupies a converted building), individual letters of an appropriate scale and design fixed to the elevation would be acceptable in most instances.**

Signage on Shop Windows and Doors

- 9.12** As outlined above, the glass of the shop windows and doors could be used as the site of additional signage, particularly if the existing fascia is shallow or small or where a separate business is operating on an upper floor. The fixing of individual letters and graphics of logos to the glass of shop windows in a manner that does not overly obscure views into and out of the window is normally acceptable.
- 9.13** Any signage adhered to a shop window should not dominate the window: the signage should be secondary to the windows display to preserve the appearance of the shopfront. Most of the glass should remain clear to ensure there is adequate intervisibility between the interior and the street, enabling a good level of natural surveillance. For this reason, large panels of glass-mounted signage are unacceptable, as is cluttering a shop window with many small notices.



Logos and lettering applied to glass without obscuring the window display

Hanging and Projecting Signs

- 9.14** In some cases there might be space to fit a projecting or hanging sign in a manner that harmonises with the design of the shopfront and the building's overall design. These signs should generally be at fascia level the same depth as the fascia. Any projecting or hanging sign should have at least 2.4m clearance between its lower edge and the pavement level, in the interests of highway safety. The signs should also maintain at least a 450mm gap from the back of the kerb edge to ensure that they do not overhang the highway on narrow sections of the footway. A setback of 650mm is required if the carriageway is frequented by HGVs. Projecting signs which overhang the public highway require a licence (under Section 177 of the Highways Act) from the Council for which a small administrative charge is made.

9.15 In most cases, projecting box signs are unacceptable, as are hanging signs at first or second storey level. The bracket or fixing for the sign should be of an appropriate design and style and be fitted where it does not damage or obscure architectural detail.



These projecting signs align with the fascia and are appropriate in scale.

9.16 Signs should be of modest size with well-designed proportions and should not compete with or obscure neighbouring projecting signs in respect their scale or location. As a general guide they should project no more than 450mm from the shopfront elevation and should not exceed 500mm in any dimension with each sign considered on its merits. Timber hand-painted signs with raised/moulded surround are particularly appropriate but sometimes metal can be acceptable. Hanging symbols depicting the nature of the trade can add interest and variety to the street scene.

9.17 Banner signs can sometimes be considered as an alternative to traditional hanging signs. However, these can be very dominant and overbearing and should be avoided, particularly in conservation areas and on listed buildings.

10. Canopies / Blinds

- 10.1** The purpose of canopies and blinds should be to provide weather protection to shoppers and shop window displays. They can add interest and vitality to a building and the wider area if they are carefully designed as an integral part of the shopfront.
- 10.2** The appearance of canopies / blinds is important. Care should be taken over the size, shape, materials, colour and positioning of the canopy / blind, to ensure that it is in keeping with the character of the building and wider street scene. The materials and colour should correspond with or complement the existing shopfront and fascia sign. Wet look materials, shiny plastics, garish or fluorescent colours are considered as inappropriate.
- 10.3** Any lettering or logos to feature on the canopy must be kept to a minimum and should not dominate the canopy. The style of the lettering should match with the design of the whole shopfront, particularly the fascia sign.
- 10.4** Where there is a single occupier of two or more adjacent shop units, each unit must have a separate canopy.
- 10.5** Retractable roller blinds when well designed and positioned can enhance a traditional shopfront. Roller blinds should be retracted into a `blind box` fitted flush with the fascia to maintain an uncluttered shopfront.
- 10.6** Canopies / blinds must not be erected in such a way that would cause obstruction or danger to passers-by and should not interfere with the visibility of traffic signs or signals. All blinds / canopies must clear the footpath by a minimum of 2.4m and there should be at least 450mm between the kerb edge and outermost edge of the canopy. A setback of 650mm is required if the carriageway is frequented by HGVs
- 10.7** Listed building consent will be required where a proposal involves a listed building.

11. Security

11.1 Successful shop security should make the premises safe, make people in the street feel safe during and outside of trading hours, and maintain or enhance the character of the shopping area.

11.2 In recent decades shopkeepers have installed solid external roller shutters as a means of crime prevention. These shutters may provide security, but they make the street feel dead and unsafe. This increases the fear of crime for pedestrians, particularly at night when most shutters are down. If poorly designed the roller shutter, its external steel box and its runners all obscure the details of the shopfront and can squash the proportions of windows and signage. It is for these reasons of fear of crime, deadening the street and the visual impact that solid external roller shutters are unacceptable.



Just after closing time, all of the roller shutters are down creating an unattractive, uninviting street scene.

11.3 There are alternative ways of ensuring that a shop is secure that can also make the street feel safer and look more attractive. These are:

- **SECURITY GLASS** – in many instances the installation of security glass has no impact on the appearance of the shop. Laminated glass offers both security and safety. Whilst planning permission is not normally required to replace glass, if the building retains its historic glass, it is desirable to keep this and the removal of historic glass in a listed building requires consent.
- **LOCKS** – a simple way of making doors and windows more secure. Locks should be certificated and approved as listed on the “Secured by Design” website⁶. Windows are only tested as a whole unit, rather than individual locks.
- **REINFORCED STALLRISERS** - adding structural strength and impact resistance to the stallriser provides greater security. The outside of the stallriser would look the same, it could even be timber clad and traditional looking.

⁶ For more details see <http://www.securedbydesign.com/>

- **INTERNAL GRILLES OR INTERNAL SHUTTERS** – these have no impact on the exterior of the shop but provide a high level of security to the interior. The space between the internal grille of a shutter and the shop window can contain an illuminated display that adds life to the street even when the shop is closed, thereby making the street feel safer. The internal grille or shutter should be an open link type so that there is a clear view into the shop from the street.



This internal link-shutter coupled with good internal lighting permits views into the shop, adds life to the street and allows window shopping outside of opening hours.

- **REMOVABLE EXTERNAL SHUTTERS** – these were traditionally used before roller shutters were widely used and are still used at some shops. There is no reason why they cannot be used in modern shopfronts. Removable external shutters should be made of a material and design that suit the overall shopfront, such as painted timber. Steel framed meshes with heavy gauge wire can be an acceptable alternative. The removable nature of these shutters or grilles means that there is no impact on the appearance of the shop when the shutters are removed. The grille-type shutters allow views into the shop.
- **OPEN GRILLE ROLLER SHUTTERS** – these will only be allowed on existing buildings where it has been demonstrated that it is not feasible to install an alternative, or there is evidence of persistent vandalism which would not be prevented by the use of internal shutters. Even where these are allowed, other than in exceptional circumstances the shutter box should be hidden behind the fascia rather than fixed to the outside of the shop. The runners must be discretely hidden in the design of the shopfront, thereby lessening the impact on the appearance of the shopfront, and the open grille design would allow views into the shop when closed. External shutters require planning permission and may require listed building consent if the shop is part of a listed building. External shutters are unacceptable in conservation areas or on listed buildings.
- **GATED DOORWAYS** – Where shops have the doorway set back from the pavement, additional protection can be provided by providing gates that fold out of the way when the shop is open. The gates can be timber or metal and can be attractively designed as well as robust. The use of lighting can also act as a deterrent in recessed doorways.

11.4 The above measures can be complemented by improved lighting within the shop and the use of alarms or other intruder detection equipment. Reference should be made to the Police initiative “Secured by Design” and to monitored security alarms with a police unique reference number. The street should be better illuminated and more attractive at night for pedestrians. If the inside of each shop is lit up after dark and security measures allow light to spill from the shop onto the pavement, the street will feel safer. This in turn should attract more people to the area at night because rows of shutters give the impression of a ‘no go area’. If there are more people in the area after dark, this will reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour. Where feasible, returning any vacant floors above shops to use ensures that someone is likely to be at or in the vicinity of the shop at all times of day. This is a deterrent to crime and anti-social behaviour.

11.5 The placement of security equipment on a building frontage, for example CCTV cameras and security lighting should not detract from the character of the building and should allow architectural details of the building to remain visually prominent.

11.6 In all matters of security it is important to consult the Merseyside Police Designing Out Crime Officer, as well as the Planning Authority.

Guidance: Security

- 1. To accord with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough’s Historic Environment, shopfront security measures will be expected to:**
 - a) Be considered at the outset of the design of a shopfront so that they form an integral part of the design rather than an afterthought;**
 - b) Avoid creating a ‘dead frontage’ or a less safe-feeling environment outside opening hours. Shopfront security measures that maintain an open frontage and spill light into the street are encouraged;**
 - c) In the case of new buildings or shop fronts only use internal or removable grilles or shutters.**
 - d) In the case of existing buildings and shop fronts, use internal or removable grilles or shutters unless it has been demonstrated that it is not feasible to install an alternative, or there is evidence of persistent vandalism which would not be prevented by the use of internal shutters. In which case external open grill shutters with their box recessed behind a fascia sign may be acceptable.**
 - e) Be discrete and avoid influencing the proportions of the shopfront or its signage. Features like external roller shutter boxes or prominent shutter runners will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances; and**

- f) **Make the street feel safer, for example by incorporating illuminated internal window displays that enliven the street scene at night and make the shopping area feel more inviting after hours.**
- g) **Reference should be made to the Police initiative “Secured by Design”. This covers all aspects of security and designing out crime.**

12. Lighting

- 12.1** Well illuminated shopping streets are attractive and make an area feel safer in the evening than those that are only lit by street lights. An attractively illuminated shop window or sign provide a way of advertising a business. The type and design of lighting should complement the building and the shopping area's character and appearance.
- 12.2** The most effective lighting of shopfronts and signage is considered at the design stage rather than 'tacked on' as an afterthought. Light fittings should be incorporated into the design of the shopfront in a discreet manner to avoid cluttering the shopfront with light fittings and wires.
- 12.3** The most effective lighting is achieved by for example lighting up the display window or giving subtle 'halo' lighting to fascia lettering. With the advent of LED lighting, it is possible to obtain long-lasting small lighting fixtures which work well on shopfronts. The use of fittings which are bulky, indiscriminately throw light across the elevation, or clutter the elevation due to their size, siting or number will not be permitted.
- 12.4** Internally illuminated signage will be subject to restrictions on its brightness. External sources of illumination must be directed away from the highway and/or fitted with cowling, to prevent dazzle to road users and passers-by. Additionally, signs must not interrupt the visibility of road signs. The Highways department at Knowsley Council can provide planning conditions which restrict the brightness of advertisements. This is in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Engineers (ILE) Technical Note 5 'The Brightness of Illuminated Advertisement'.

Guidance: Lighting

- 1. To comply with Local Plan: Core Strategy Policies CS2: Development Principles, CS19: Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development and CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment, the following is expected with regard to the illumination of shopfronts and signage:**
 - a) Lighting (and any wiring required) should be considered as an integral part of the shopfront design and be as discrete as possible;**
 - b) Swan neck lights, traditional style lanterns and other 'feature' lighting fixtures will in almost all cases not be permitted as they almost always look out of place and clutter the shopfront rather than enhance it;**
 - c) Discrete lighting to the principal sign and shop window to promote vitality in the street scene and add to security at night will usually be accepted;**
 - d) Internal illumination to signage will only be permitted subject to restrictions on its brightness. Discrete halo lighting may also be acceptable in some cases;**
 - e) Where a shopfront has recesses or projections that can provide shelter for discrete modern light fittings, these should be used in preference to siting lights where they would clutter the elevation; and**
 - f) Lighting should consider amenity, and where needed, highway safety, by not being too bright, indiscriminately casting light or being animated.**

13. Conversions from Shopfront to Residential

- 13.1** Knowsley Council supports planning applications for residential development in town, district, major and medium local centres and local shopping centres / parades providing the proposed development does not have a detrimental impact on the vibrancy and vitality of the centre. For detail guidance on residential development within retail centres, please refer to the [Town Centre Use SPD \(2022\)](#).
- 13.2** As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this SPD, the new permitted development right `Class MA` allows for the change of use from a commercial, business and service use (Use Class E) to a residential use (Use Class C3). Changes made under permitted development rights should also follow the following guidelines.
- 13.3** Planning applications for revisions to shopfronts to enable the building's residential use should generally retain the shopfront's appearance to the greatest extent possible. Conversions must complement the building as a whole and retain or enhance its character. The design of the windows, doors and detailing should generally match those of the existing building.
- 13.4** The replacement of shopfronts with solid walls and windows, or domestic architecture, is unacceptable.
- 13.5** Proposals for the conversion of ground floors must consider access arrangements to upper floors. If there is an existing independent access to the upper floor flat, then ideally this should be used as the access for the new ground residential use. Where this is not possible, care is required in positioning the new door.

Appendix 1: Glossary

Cill – horizontal bar at the bottom of a window frame.

Conservation Area - An area defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “an area of special architectural and historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”

Design and Access Statement (DAS) - a short report accompanying and supporting a planning application. They provide a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting and demonstrate that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users.

Fascia - this is the horizontal band at or near the top of the shopfront where the main sign is usually located.

Illuminated advertisement – An advertisement which is designed or adapted to be illuminated by artificial lighting, directly or by reflection, and which is so illuminated (whether continuously or from time to time).

Listed Building - Buildings included in the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Listing decisions are made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the listing system is administered by Historic England.

Listed Building Consent - Permission required before work can be undertaken that might affect the character or appearance of listed buildings.

Local Plan - The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the community. The Local Plan includes "Development Plan Documents" adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In Knowsley, this includes Local Plan Core Strategy and Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan, accompanied by a Local Plan Proposals Map Policies Map. The Local Plan also includes the Saved Policies of the Knowsley Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006).

Local Plan: Core Strategy - A document which forms the central part of the Knowsley Local Plan and sets out the long-term spatial vision, objectives and strategic policies for the borough. The Local Plan Core Strategy has the formal status of a Development Plan Document.

Mullion - A vertical glazing bar that separates a window into two or more sections.

National Planning Policy Guidance - online guidance which replaced most of the pre-existing planning guidance and should be read alongside the NPPF. The guidance is intended to be updated when the Government reviews its planning guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - The National Planning Policy Framework was revised on 20 July 2021 and sets out the government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. This revised framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018 and February 2019 and updated in July 2021. The policies of the NPPF will be applied alongside those in Knowsley’s Local Plan (and the supplementary guidance in this SPD).

Secured by Design – is the official UK Police flagship initiative supporting the principles of ‘designing out crime’. Secured by Design focuses on crime prevention of homes and

commercial premises and promotes the use of security standards for a wide range of applications and products.

Stallriser - A solid base to the shopfront beneath the shop window providing a transitional element between the glass of the shop window and the ground.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - A planning policy document which provides supplementary information in respect of the policies contained in the Local Plan, and which focus on particular issues or places. They are subject to consultation but are not subject to an independent examination.

Vitality - How busy a retail centre is at different times of the day. This can be measured in various ways e.g., foot traffic via pedestrian count.

Appendix 2

Permissions and Consents

a) Planning Permission and Building Regulations

Table 1: Informs of whether proposed works will require planning permission and building Regulations

Planning Permission and Building Regulations	
I am repairing a shopfront on a like for like basis, matching materials and detailing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is unlikely that you will need planning permission for this. ▪ Depending on what the works are you may require building regulations approval.
I am altering a shopfront so that it looks different to how it does now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You must apply for planning permission. ▪ You will also need building regulations approval.
I am restoring a shopfront: I am changing it back to how it used to be.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You must apply for planning permission. ▪ You will also require building regulations approval.
I am adding a shutter or grille to the outside of the shop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You must apply for planning permission. ▪ You will need building regulations approval.
I am adding a shutter or grille to the inside of the shop.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You may require planning permission. ▪ You will need building regulations approval.
I am re-painting the shopfront	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You may need planning permission if the paintwork materially affects the building's character and appearance. In most cases planning permission is not required. ▪ You will need building regulations approval for this.

b) Listed Buildings, Shopfronts and Signage

The following works are likely to require listed building consent:

Any works to the shopfront of a listed building other than the like for like repair in matching materials and details will need listed building consent first.

Any new signage (illuminated or not) on a listed building will need listed building consent unless it is a like for like replacement of the same size and similar appearance.

The removal, addition or alteration of entrance floor tiles.

Painting any previously unpainted areas of the shopfront (e.g., stone, tiles or brick).

In some circumstances, repainting in a markedly different colour or pattern.

Staining or varnishing painted timber will need listed building consent.

In some circumstances, altering a shop interior.

The installation of an extractor fan outlet.

c) Advertisement Consent

Table 2: Consent to display advertisements

Consent to erect and display advertisements	
I am replacing existing signs with new ones that are the same size as the existing signs or are smaller. The new signs are generally similar appearance to the existing.	You do not need to apply for advertisement consent if the new signs are non-illuminated.
I am replacing existing signs with new ones that are bigger than the existing signs.	You may need to apply for advertisement consent
I am putting up new signs where there aren't any now	You may need to apply for advertisement consent
I am going to light up an existing sign or I am putting up new illuminated signs	You may need to apply for advertisement consent
I am replacing a flat sign with a box sign or projecting sign.	You may need to apply for advertisement consent
My new signs will change the character and appearance of the shopfront or building.	You may need to apply for advertisement consent
I am putting signs inside my shop window	You may need to apply for advertisement consent

Appendix 3

National Planning Policy, Guidance and Contacts

A) National Planning Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) -The NPPF should be read as a whole, and so individual policies will not be quoted here. However, the policies relating to design and local distinctiveness are all relevant to planning applications to alter or replace shopfronts or signage. The policies on the conservation of the built environment may be relevant where heritage assets like conservation areas or listed buildings are involved.

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) - The NPPG replaced all of the existing planning guidance. It should be read alongside the NPPF. This document only exists online and is updated as and when the Government reviews or updates its planning guidance. Like the NPPF it has sections on design and conserving the historic environment, plus it has a section on advertisements.

B) Other National Guidance

- **Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers (2007)**. This illustrated Government-published guidance explains when signage would and would not require planning permission.
- **Easy Access to Historic Buildings (June 2015)** English Heritage

C) Knowsley Local Plan Core strategy

Policy C2: Development Principles

- 1) *New development in Knowsley and the preparation of subsequent stages of the Local Plan will be expected to support the following development principles:*

Principle 1: *Promote sustainable economic development, tackle the causes of deprivation and disadvantage and narrow the gap between the richest and poorest neighbourhoods by:*

- a) *Meeting needs for new housing, employment, retail and other service provision;*
- b) *Improving business productivity and employment levels in Knowsley;*
- c) *Reducing economic, environmental, education, health and other social*
- d) *inequalities between Knowsley and other parts of the UK; and*
- e) *Providing opportunities for positive lifestyle choices and health improvement for people of all ages.*

Principle 2: *Reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the effects of climate change by:*

- a) *Contributing to reductions in carbon dioxide emissions from all sources, in line with national targets;*

- b) *Ensuring an ability to adapt to future changes to national targets for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, including recognising the role of new technology;*
- c) *Identifying and applying measures offering effective mitigation and adaptation to likely environmental, social and economic impacts of climate change; and*
- d) *Meeting appropriate minimum standards for sustainability.*

Principle 3: *Reduce the need to travel and increase accessibility by:*

- a) *Selecting locations that reduce the need to travel, especially by car, and enable people as far as possible to meet their needs locally;*
- b) *Assisting the Council in achieving a shift towards more sustainable modes of transport for people, goods and freight;*
- c) *Encouraging safe and sustainable access for all, particularly by promoting the use of public transport, walking and cycling between homes and employment; and*
- d) *Supporting the provision and retention of shared space, community facilities and other local services (such as local shops, health facilities, education provision, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship).*

Principle 4: *Recognise environmental limits, protect and enhance environmental assets, enhance local character and promote quality of place by:*

- a) *Understanding and respecting the character and distinctiveness of places and landscapes;*
- b) *Protecting and enhancing the historic environment;*
- c) *Promoting good quality design and ensuring that development respects its setting taking into account relevant design requirements, and best practice;*
- d) *Maximising opportunities for the regeneration of previously developed land, including derelict or unsightly areas to improve the image of Knowsley and use land resources efficiently;*
- e) *Mitigating potential negative impacts of traffic growth and road traffic on highway safety, air quality, noise and health;*
- f) *Supporting policies relating to Green Infrastructure and the greening of towns and cities;*
- g) *Maintaining or enhancing the tranquility of open countryside and rural areas;*
- h) *Maintaining or enhancing the quantity and quality of biodiversity and habitats, including potential impacts on nationally and internationally important sites for biodiversity;*
- i) *Addressing any issues of unstable land, resulting from Knowsley's legacy of minerals extraction; and*
- j) *Minimising negative impact upon flood risk, air quality, water quality, land quality, soil quality, and noise or vibration levels and ensuring any negative impacts are appropriately mitigated. Development that will have an unacceptable impact upon any of the above will only be permitted where the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the harm.*

Principle 5: *Make the most efficient use of available resources and infrastructure by prioritising locations consistent with the spatial strategy, which:*

- a) *Do not require major investment in new infrastructure, including transport, water supply and sewerage, or where this is unavoidable, incorporate appropriate development phasing and delivery assistance;*

- b) *Ensure environmental protection is enhanced through the phasing of new development and delivery of supporting infrastructure, including working with neighbouring authorities and key partner agencies where appropriate;*
- c) *Support prudent and efficient management of natural and man-made resources; and*
- d) *Promote sustainable construction and efficiency in resource use (including reuse and recycling of materials).*

Application for the Development Principles

- 2) *The development principles are not in order of priority, will be applied equally alongside other Local Plan policies, and will be implemented using development assessment tools including:*
 - a) *Environmental Impact Assessment and associated legislative requirements;*
 - b) *Health Impact Assessment;*
 - c) *Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment;*
 - d) *Transport Assessment and Travel Planning; and*
 - e) *Design and Access Statements.*

Policy CS19 – Design Quality and Accessibility in New Development

- 1) *To enhance the local distinctiveness, identity and accessibility of places, new development within Knowsley will be expected to:*
 - a) *Respond to and integrate positive characteristics of immediate surroundings, including local materials, scale, mass, form, layout, alignment and density of the existing built environment;*
 - b) *Complement and enhance (where possible), existing landscape, topography, Green Infrastructure; and features of local importance and historic interest;*
 - c) *Consider provision of landmark buildings and additional detailing at and adjacent to main gateways, movement corridors, town centres and strategic regeneration opportunities;*
 - d) *Create spaces and places as a focal point, accommodating social interaction and active lifestyles, including provision and integration of high quality public realm and open spaces, public art (as appropriate); and landscaping which promotes biodiversity and integrates existing local habitats;*
 - e) *Provide safe, secure and convenient routes for movement (including signage), with priority for walking, cycling and public transport, to meet the access needs of all users, particularly pedestrians, cyclists, less mobile people and the elderly;*
 - f) *Integrate effectively with existing development and link to existing shopping and service provision; and*
 - g) *Demonstrate community engagement during the design phase of major development proposals.*

- 2) *To maintain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, development proposals will be required to:*
 - a) Avoid unacceptable impacts on existing residents, business occupiers, and future occupiers;
 - b) Minimise crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, including good levels of natural surveillance and security; and
 - c) Accommodate future maintenance and long-term management requirements.

- 3) *To address the challenges of climate change and future changes in social, economic and environmental priorities, new development should integrate:*
 - a) *Sustainable design principles, with regard to Policy CS17: Housing Sizes and Design Standards and Policy CS22: Sustainable and Low Carbon Development as appropriate;*
 - b) *Biodiversity (in accordance with Policy CS8);*
 - c) *Flood risk mitigation (in accordance with Policy CS24);*
 - d) *Waste recycling; and*
 - e) *Energy and resource efficiency.*

- 4) *Further guidance on these issues will be provided in the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies document and Supplementary Planning Documents as appropriate.*

Policy CS20: Managing the Borough's Historic Environment.

- 1) *Development proposals in Knowsley should preserve or enhance the borough's historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance.*

The Council will:

- a) *Require preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of historic assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape;*
- b) *Prevent demolition and/or development which would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated historic asset or its setting, unless the proposal would result in substantial public benefits which clearly outweigh the harm or loss;*
- c) *Where a development proposal will result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset or its setting, assess such harm against the benefits of the proposal;*
- d) *Facilitate long term conservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance, including through the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.*

- 2) *The re-use of vacant and underused historic assets will be encouraged, with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to proposals which will:
 - a) *Enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to its conservation;*
 - b) *Retain or introduce public access; and*
 - c) *Enhance the importance of the asset for local tourism, leisure or the economy.**
- 3) *Development proposals on sites which include, or are considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets or comprising archaeological interest, should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement.*
- 4) *Locally important historic assets which are not subject to statutory designation will be identified in a local list and will be afforded consideration in the decision making process.*

D) Knowsley Replacement UDP

Saved Policy S9 – Shopfronts and Security Shutters

1. *Proposals for new or altered shop fronts should:
 - a) *Relate well to the street scene in terms of materials, form and proportions;*
 - b) *If located within a Conservation Area, preserve or enhanced the character of the area;*
 - c) *Provide good access for all members of the community;**
2. *Security shutters and grilles, including their related housing shall be permitted if they:
 - a) *Fit in with the design of the building and its surroundings;*
 - b) *Have as little impact on appearance as possible during both businesses and non-business hours; and*
 - c) *When located on highway frontages provide some perforated visibility into the premises.**

Saved Policy S10 – Advertisements

Amenity considerations

Proposals to display advertisements will be permitted provided that they would not harm amenity or public safety in the following respects:

- a) *They would not have an adverse effect on visual amenity either individually or together with or advertisements;*
- b) *Any illumination would be appropriate to the area and would not harm the amenity through overly-bright, flashing or inappropriate forms of illumination;*
- c) *The advertisement would not be out of scale or harmony with the building or the existing street scene;*
- d) *They would use colours and materials which are appropriate to the context;*
- e) *They would not create clutter on a building or within the street scene;*
- f) *Where they would be within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, they would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area;*

- g) Where they would be on or close to a Listed Building they would not adversely affect the specific historic or architectural character of the building;*
- h) Where they would occur in the Green Belt they would respect the visual amenity of the countryside.*

Public Safety Considerations

- i) The proposal would not adversely affect highway safety or other forms of public safety.*

Saved Policy DQ2 – Security in the Built Environment

- 1. New development should be designed so as to provide good levels of personal and property security, as follows:*
 - a) All public highways, footpaths and cycle routes, and car parking areas should be highly visible (including at night) and have good levels of natural surveillance from nearby properties;*
 - b) The design of the building and landscaping areas should avoid creating potential hiding places whilst providing defensible space by giving definition;*
 - c) Features such as gates and fencing should be included where necessary to prevent inappropriate areas;*
 - d) The buildings themselves should be securely designed, with main entrance doors and windows enjoying good levels of natural surveillance;*
 - e) Long lengths of blank or uniform fencing or walls should be avoided where these would create dead frontages; and*
 - f) Large developments should include a mixtures of uses and / or types of dwellings to maximise surveillance through the day and night;*

- 2. Security features such as fencing, walls and CCTV cameras and lighting (both in new developments and where proposed to provide added security to existing developments) should be designed as to avoid causing harm to:*
 - a) Visual amenity;*
 - b) The amenities of occupiers of nearby property; or*
 - c) Highway safety.*

Appendix 4: Contacts

A) Contacts and Information

Useful planning links:

- [Pre-application planning advice](#)
- [How to make a planning application through the planning portal](#)
- [Planning application forms and fees](#)

Useful building control links:

- [Frequently asked building control questions](#)
- [Apply for building regulation approval](#)

The above link provides information regarding the following:

- Do I need building regulation approval?
- How to apply for building regulations approval
- Building control forms and fees

Other useful links:

- [Secured by Design](#)

For planning and / or building control advice, forms, applications and pre-applications, please contact:

Planning Services, Knowsley MBC,
Tel: 0151 443 2380, E-mail: planning@knowsley.gov.uk

Appendix 5

A. Design Checklist

Table 3: Design checklist

Topic	Checklist item	Yes / No
Heritage	Is the building or area a heritage asset? (i.e., listed, locally listed, within a conservation area)	
Heritage	Establish the building's history. Is the existing shopfront original? Are original features beneath a modern exterior? Can original features be retained and restored, or an original shopfront reinstated?	
Heritage	Find any local historic records pertaining to the property, such as historic photographs. These should inform your proposal.	
Heritage	Are there any other material considerations to inform the proposal, such as a local listing description or conservation area Appraisal?	
Local Plan Policies	Does your proposal comply with all relevant Local Plan Core Strategy policies and saved UDP policies, particularly those outlined in Appendix 3 of this SPD?	
Design	Is the proposed shopfront divided vertically and horizontally to avoid large areas of undivided glass? Inactive or closed panels should be avoided.	

Design	Is signage and advertising kept to a minimum to avoid a cluttered appearance?	
Design	Is the fascia well-designed, positioned consistently with adjoining buildings and located as not to obscure architectural features?	
Design	Will the shopfront have no more than one small projecting sign?	
Design	Will the shopfront relate in scale, proportion and architectural style to the wider building and area?	
Design	Are high quality materials proposed?	
Design	Are the materials complementary in colour and style to the existing building?	
Design	Are canopies, blinds or awnings integrated into the shopfront and consistent with the requirements stated in this document? Are the proportions appropriate?	
Security	Are any roller shutters internally fitted?	
Security	Have security measures been considered as an integral part of the overall design? What impact do these measures have on the visual appearance of the shopfront?	

Accessibility	Is the shopfront accessible for all?	
Accessibility	Is the forecourt clearly delineated from the main pavement? Is it visually uncluttered with sufficient space for pedestrians?	
Illumination	Have internally illuminated fascias and signs been avoided?	
Illumination	Are lighting levels in keeping with the character of the area?	

B. Additional considerations for conversions from shopfront to residential

Table 4: Additional considerations checklist for conversions from shopfront to residential

Checklist item	Yes / No
Is it proposed to retain the original shopfront? If not possible, are original features proposed to be retained or reinstated?	
Will adequate privacy be achieved without adverse visual impacts?	
Are windows proposed to be retained?	
Will a solid visual base, such as a stallriser, be retained?	

**For more information
log on to**

www.knowsley.gov.uk/LocalPlan

You can also get this information in other formats.
Please phone Customer Services on (0151) 443
4031 or email

customerservices@knowsley.gov.uk



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