

Shop Fronts, Signage & Advertising

Supplementary Planning Document
November 2005



Halton Borough Council

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This guidance note should be read in conjunction with the relevant policies of the Development Plan.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is to complement the Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning of new development within Halton Borough to: -

- a Improve the quality of the street scene to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of places, particularly within town centres;
- b Develop imaginative and creative shop fronts, which respect the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area in terms of scale, proportions and materials;
- c Ensure that any commercial security measure does not create an inappropriate or intimidating frontage which may reduce the overall vitality of the area;
- d Develop innovative and artistic signs and adverts, which preserve the character of the local street and surrounding area; and
- e Ensure that any designs are not detrimental to public and highway safety.

1.2 By stating this purpose, the Council will seek to improve through its function as a Local Planning Authority any development proposal that does not provide for, or meet the principles encouraged and required within this SPD and the Halton UDP.

1.3 This SPD is also intended to encourage businesses to follow the practical guidance it contains wherever

opportunities arise whether or not formal consent is required.



Photo 1: Example of a good quality street scene, which can add to the vitality and vibrancy of the area.



Photo 2: Example of a simple yet effective shop front, which can add character to a place and improve the appearance of the building and surrounding area.

2.0 Policy Background

This SPD revises and updates the Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Shop Fronts and Signs' (1999). It has been produced to ensure that through its function as a Local Planning Authority, the Council is in accordance with national and regional guidance and advice and contributes, wherever possible, to meeting the priorities of the community it serves.

2.1 National Policy

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1): Creating Sustainable Communities, states that planning should promote sustainable patterns of development by, amongst other things, ensuring high quality development through good design and ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable and liveable communities. The proposed SPD is produced to improve the planning policy framework in relation to achieving good design in development within Halton.



Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6): Planning for Town Centres, states that it is 'essential that town centres provide a high-quality and safe environment if they are to remain

attractive and competitive. Well-designed public spaces and buildings which are fit for purpose, comfortable, safe, attractive, accessible and durable, are key elements which can improve the health, vitality and economic potential of a town centre.'



Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12): Development Plans, states that well designed development responds well to the local physical, social and economic context, being safe, clean, attractive and accessible for all users.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment, highlights the importance of advertisements and shop front design in the public's experiences of the historic environment. It also provides more detailed guidance relating to the development of shop fronts and advertisements within the historic environment.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 19 (PPG19): Outdoor Advertisement Control, states that 'all advertisements affect the appearance of the building, structure or place where they are displayed. The main purpose of the

advertisement control system is to help everyone involved in the display of outdoor advertising to contribute positively to the appearance of an attractive and cared-for environment in cities, towns and the countryside.' It goes on to say that the appearance of a good building can easily be spoiled by a poorly designed or insensitively placed sign or advertisement, or by a choice of advertisement materials, colour, proportion or illumination which is alien to the building's design or fabric. This highlights the importance of design of Advertising, Signage and Shop Fronts and the need for this SPD.

2.2 Regional Policy

One of the objectives of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West is to secure high environmental and design quality within the Region, this is re-emphasised in one of the Core Principles. Policy DP3 states that local authorities should set guidance that ensures innovative design that creates high quality living and working environments.

2.3 Local Policy



The Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP), contains a number of strategic aims and objectives, these are set out in Part I of the UDP. In relation to environmental quality these include creating a safe and

healthy Halton and improving the design of buildings. At the centre of these strategic aims and objectives is the desire of the Council to create sustainable places that all people will want to live and work within.

Part 2 of the UDP contains policies that seek to implement the broad aims and objectives contained within Part I of the UDP. This SPD supplements the following policies of the current Halton UDP and will form part of the Halton Local Development Framework (LDF):

- Policy BE1: General Requirements for Development, states that new development must be of a high quality design that respects or, where necessary, creates local distinctiveness.
- Policy BE2: Quality of Design, provides the guiding principles which development will be expected to have regard to, these include: optimising the relationship and integration of buildings and the surrounding hard and soft landscape and creating visual interest, particularly at street level.
- BE16: Alterations to and New Shop Fronts, provides the criteria for all new shop fronts or alterations to existing shop fronts.
- BE17: Advertising and Advertisements, sets out the criteria which will be considered in deciding any application for Advertisement Consent or enforcing the discontinuance of a display after the specified period.
- TC5: Design of Retail Development, provides the design criteria for retail development including extensions to existing premises.

Due to the special characteristics and designations of both Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, more stringent controls

will be applied and following policies of the UDP are applicable in those cases:

- Policy BE9: Alterations and additions to Listed Buildings, provides the criteria that must be met by any proposals to alter or extend any listed building
- Policy BE10: Protecting the setting of Listed Buildings, states that 'development which would affect the setting of a listed building should aim to preserve both the character of that setting and its historic relationship to the listed building.'
- BE12: General Development Criteria – Conservation Areas, sets out the criteria which will be used in determining any development proposals with a Conservation Area.

This SPD is intended to contribute to the priorities, principles, objectives and targets of the Halton Community Strategy, 2002/03 to 2005/06. This strategy coordinates the resources of the local public, private and voluntary organisations towards common purposes. Two of the main priorities set out in the community strategy identify the issues which this SPD aims to address. Within the priority to *promote urban renewal* one of the objectives is to remould and enhance the three town centres and another is to ensure a high quality of attractiveness and maintenance of the public realm, especially along strategic routes and in town centres. Within the priority to *ensure safe and attractive neighbourhoods* one of the objectives is to bring about environmental improvements in all areas of the Borough reflecting the priorities of the public to improve public perceptions and attractiveness.

3.0 Understanding the Issues

3.1 Overview

Halton has three town centres at Widnes, Runcorn Old Town and Halton Lea, and the quality and image of these shopping centres play an important role in securing economic growth and prosperity.

The Council recognises that many businesses invest heavily in promoting their corporate images. These have become established features of modern commercial areas, but occasionally it will be desirable to modify these styles to achieve better harmonisation with the building it is on or the area in which it is displayed. This approach will be to the benefit of all businesses.

Primarily this guidance is applicable to all commercial premises having some form of frontage at street level including banks, building societies, solicitors, estate agencies, betting offices, public houses and cafes as well as retail outlets. It also advises on other miscellaneous commercial signage, display and security.

3.2 Vitality and Viability

The Community Strategy for Halton includes improving the vitality and viability of the three town centres within its improvement targets.

There have been times during the past where there has been a lack of investment in each of the centres. This has led to areas of vacancy and dereliction, which are uninviting and outdated in appearance. It is important for the future of the centres that they remain competitive and guard against complacency. This could be achieved in least in part by building upon the individual characters that our town centres have, and improving amongst other things the design of shop fronts, signage and advertising.



Photo 3: An example of an area of under investment where a proportion of the units are vacant and many of the upper floors are under utilised.

Within Runcorn Old Town Centre there is a strong service sector including financial services and estate agents, which have seen considerable growth in recent years. This can have impacts on the number of active shop fronts and if this impact is not properly managed it can create uninviting areas and low pedestrian activity.

3.3 Access

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 emphasised the need to ensure that non-domestic buildings are accessible to everyone in the community, including disabled people and is therefore a key issue in the design of any development in the Borough including Shop Fronts.

3.4 Crime

Although crime in Halton is actually quite low when compared to other areas, there is still a need to create safer places, by reducing crime, the fear of crime and anti social behaviour. This can be achieved through encouraging greater pedestrian activity. People and activity provide a natural presence and deterrent and make a place safer and more vibrant.

4.0 Guiding Principles

4.1 Introduction

Good design gives an impression of quality and permanence and makes the shopping environment more attractive for everyone. This in turn will increase business confidence. In contrast, poorly designed or maintained shop fronts can have a significant adverse impact, not just on the environment of the area but upon the local economy and the well being of residents and visitors to the Borough.

4.2 The Value of Good Design



The Value of Good Design aims to draw together key research from the UK and abroad to show that investment in good design generates economic and social value. It states that research published by CABI and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in 2001 found that the better designed schemes provided a range of economic, social and environmental benefits including higher rental levels, lower maintenance costs, enhanced regeneration and increased public support for the development.

4.3 Planning and Access for Disabled People

Contains several good practice points of relevance to this document. Including the fact that all parties involved in the planning

and development process should recognise the benefits of, and endeavour to bring about inclusive design.

4.4 Building in Context



The belief underlying 'Building in context' is that the right approach is to be found in examining the context for any proposed development in great detail and relating the new building to its surroundings through an informed character appraisal. It suggests that a successful project will:

- relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land;
- sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it;
- respect important views;
- respect the scale of neighbouring buildings;
- use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings; and
- create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting.

5.0 General Principles

5.1 Shop Front Replacement

Wherever possible the original shop (including pubs, banks, solicitors, estate agent etc) should be retained. In some cases, original features may have been hidden behind more modern fascias and panelling. Any surviving examples of first floor features should also be retained.

Where a proposal intends to replace modern frontages on a building, which is either Listed, or within a Conservation Area, the Council will ask for an investigation to reveal any existing original features.

Good modern designs will be acceptable, providing that they relate well to the building on which they are to be installed, respecting the character of the building and the street scene.

5.2 The Street Scene

The design of the shop front should take into account the rhythm and characteristics of the street in which it is located.

Many buildings will have a strong vertical emphasis and this combined with an average plot width of 5-7m will create an agreeable rhythm and proportion, producing visual harmony within the street. This can be destroyed by fascias which are over-long and/or too deep. This destroys the relationship between the ground and upper facade and creates a jarring horizontal emphasis. This can be overcome by using mullions or recessed entrances to break up long displays and ensuring that fascia box width is in proportion to the building and usually not extending above the cornice.



Photo 4: Good example of a street scene where the rhythm and character of the street is maintained.

Diagram 1: Poor Example of a Street Scene



Diagram 2: Good Example of a Street Scene



6.0 Elements of Commercial Fascias

In the 18th and 19th Centuries, a set of basic design elements evolved to contain the shop front in much the same way as a picture frame contains its subject. Broadly based upon the principles of classical architecture, they comprise: - pilaster, fascia, cornice and stallriser. Each has its practical and visual function. Shop fronts incorporating these elements sensitively designed and proportioned have proved an enduring and successful formula for the presentation of commercial premises.

6.1 Materials and Finishes

The use of materials and finishes needs to be considered during the early stages of any changes to the design of a shop front. **The materials, colours and finishes of any features should be considered with regard to the character of the shop itself and the surrounding area.**

Where possible **traditional brick stallrisers should be retained** or replaced it with brick or similar sympathetic materials.

Traditional timber fascias should also be retained or replaced with a new timber fascia or similar sympathetic materials. Care needs to be taken to ensure that the new fascia complements the surrounding area and the shop front. If Perspex or plastic are to be used, an important consideration is their colour and finish. Reflective fascias will normally be discouraged.

Where window frames need to be replaced, aluminium may prove an appropriate solution. However, **careful consideration should be given to the material, colour and finish of any new window frames** to ensure that the character of the area is not affected.

6.2 Fascia

The fascia forms a space for advertising and together with the cornice it provides a strong line at the top of the shop front, which visually supports the upper floors of the building.

Fascias should be of an appropriate depth to fit the building and respect its features. Preferably they should not extend across more than one shop front even when they are in the same ownership or use. Their depth including any cornice should be in scale with the façade and should not normally exceed 20% of the total height of the shop front.

Fascias should not extend above the sill line of first floor windows nor obscure original architectural detail.

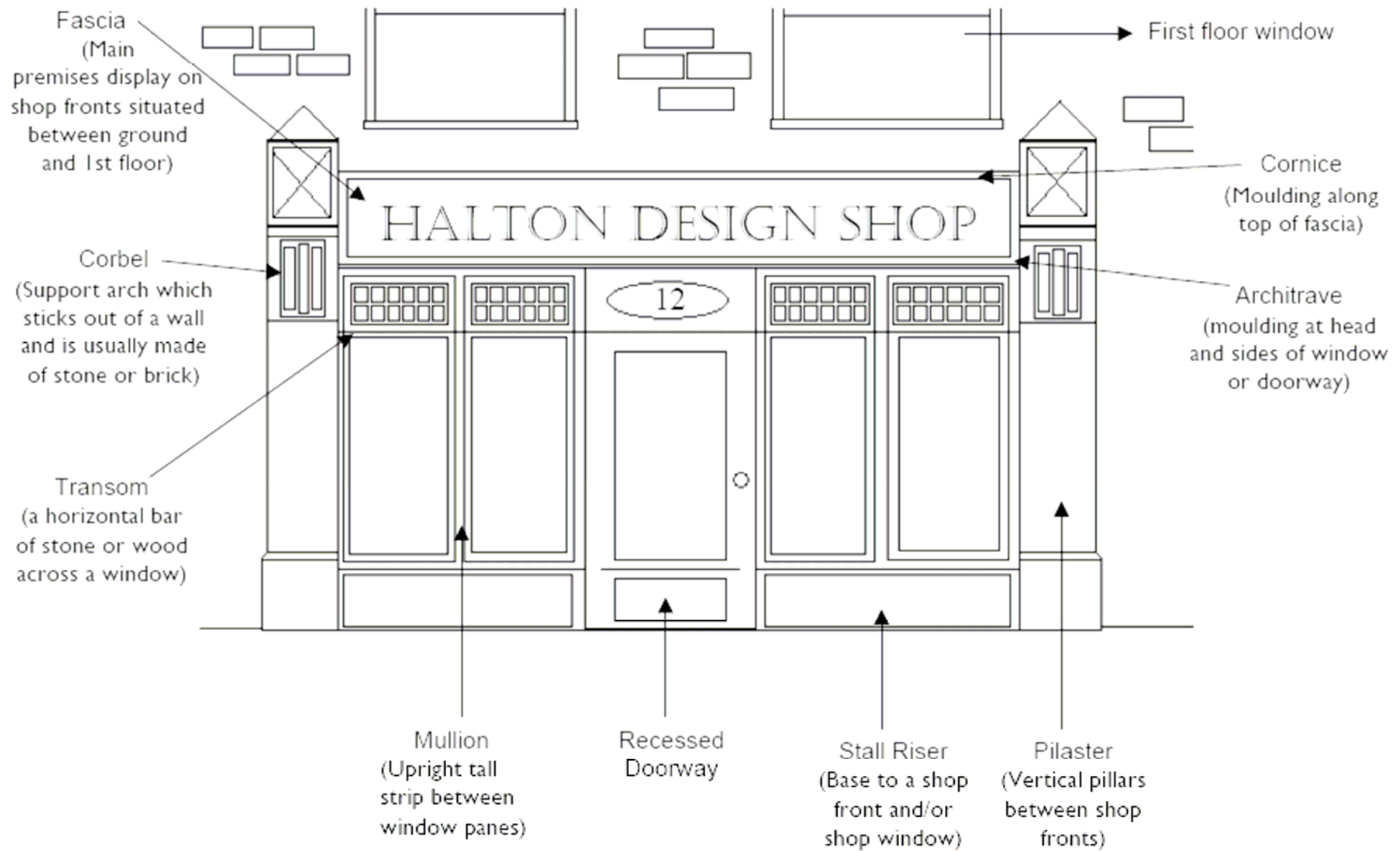
Box fascias that project substantially forward of the main face of the building will not be acceptable as they are obtrusive in the street scene and often obscure traditional architectural detailing. A License under the Highways Act will be required if the fascia extends over the area above an adjacent walkway or road. A minimum clearance of 2.4 metres between the bottom of the fascia and walkway beneath is required.

Internally illuminated-boxed fascias will not be acceptable on Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas.

6.3 Pilasters and Console Brackets

These elements are particularly important in the design of the shop front providing the sides of the frame in which goods are displayed and visual support for the remainder of the building. They add to the vertical emphasis of a building and traditionally they also marked the sideways limit of each retail unit.

Diagram 3: Traditional Shop Front



Pilasters should not be clad, treated separately on each side of the party line, or cluttered with fixtures such as signs, alarm boxes or blind fittings.

When replacing pilasters and console it is appropriate to discuss the proposal with the owners of adjoining properties as these elements are sometimes shared.

6.4 Windows & Displays

The method of display with the shop is crucial not only for attracting the customer but also for creating a lively street atmosphere. However, the display of goods in front of a shop and located on the highway will not be accepted where it causes an obstruction or affects highway safety.

Sub-division of large windows can help to reflect the proportions of the building above and can give the shop front a more human scale. However, **the method of sub-division of large windows should suit the character of the shop front and building.** For example, glazing bars or mullions can be used to divide the panes or doors and recesses can be used to generally divide the window area.

Should a **cash dispenser** be needed, it **must be treated as an integral part of the window design** and sympathetic materials should be used.

Some business premises do not display goods, where this is the case, **an imaginative approach to the window display is encouraged**, to avoid the deadening effect such units can have in the streetscene. However, shop windows should not be obscured by a proliferation of stickers.

Laminated glass should be used in all shop fronts when a safety and security glass is required. This is available in 7.5mm, 9.5mm and 11.5mm thickness and can be cut to size or drilled. It is a legal requirement to install safety glass to BS 6206

in certain locations especially low level glazing with which passers by are likely to come into contact. Further details of this can be found in Building Regulations Part N.

6.5 Stallrisers

Stallrisers are a vital element of a shop front design providing a visual base for the whole shop and more security and protection at ground level than glazing.

Shop fronts on most buildings should incorporate a stallriser.

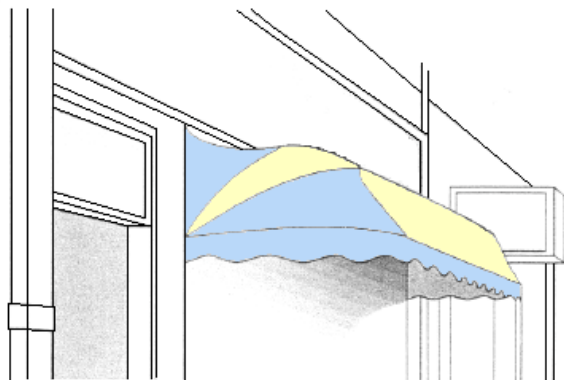
6.6 Canopies and Blinds

These can often provide a touch of colour and interest when well designed and protect goods from damage by sunlight.

Where they currently exist, **traditional blinds should be retained or renewed.** However, where new blinds are required, the most appropriate solution is normally a retractable roller blind. These can be pulled down only when required and do not permanently obscure the fascia.

Blinds should respect the character of the buildings in which they are situated and should be located where they do not obscure architectural detail, they should fit neatly between the pilasters, should be of a non-reflective finish and should normally only be used on ground floor display windows. Dutch blinds or 'balloon' canopies are usually added as a means of increasing space. The use of plastics or 'wet look' stretch fabrics normally used on Dutch blinds is strongly discouraged, as is the use of fixed blinds which obscure the shop front details.

Diagram 4: Example of an inappropriate Dutch blind, which uses wet look fabric and is fixed open.



A License under the Highways Act will be required if the canopy or blind extends over the area above an adjacent walkway or road. A minimum clearance of 2.4 metres between the bottom of the canopy and walkway beneath is required. The Highways Division can be contacted, using the contact details in the Appendix, if more detail is required about this subject.

6.7 Lettering

By far the most pleasing and sympathetic approach to signage is the use of individual letters either painted or fixed to the backdrop of the fascia or façade. The depth of fascia will mainly determine size and style of lettering.

Background colours and lettering should be sensitive to the host building, on older buildings more muted colours should be used: dark blue, green, red and brown together with cream or gold lettering and trim.

One way to make a shop front "individual" is to use individual lettering and/or decorative signs on the inside of the shop window. This can be acceptable providing the sizes and colour of lettering is sympathetic for the host building. The Council will generally encourage the use of hand painted sign writing.



Photo 5: Good example of a shop front, where the traditional features have been maintained.

6.8 Illuminated Signs

It is accepted that illumination is both desirable and often essential from a commercial viewpoint. This need not conflict with planning policy and indeed can provide colour and interest to the street scene at night.

Signs should not be so bright that they may create a danger or annoyance.

Illuminated signs will only be allowed in town centres, other areas of predominately commercial or industrial use, shopping parades or on major roads. However, they will not be permitted where they adversely affect the character or setting of a Listed Building, the appearance of a conservation area, or the residents amenity of an area. The permitted limits of luminance will be set out within conditions applied to the application.

There are two basic ways of illuminating signs, either internally or externally by means of strip lighting or spotlights. As a matter of policy:

- **Internal illumination of complete fascia halo lit Perspex and fluorescent lighting are considered undesirable and will be resisted.**

- **Illumination of individual letters or spot lighting of non-illuminated signs or fascia will be considered acceptable** providing they are in keeping with the surrounding environment, do not cause additional clutter and do not cause any danger or annoyance. The source of illumination should be discreetly hidden on suitable parts of the building.

The intermittent illumination of signs is not acceptable.

6.9 Projecting and Hanging Signs

The town centres at present contain all sorts of projecting signs of which some are acceptable. It is the aim of the Council to discourage the use of small box signs and to encourage the use of more traditional hanging signs.

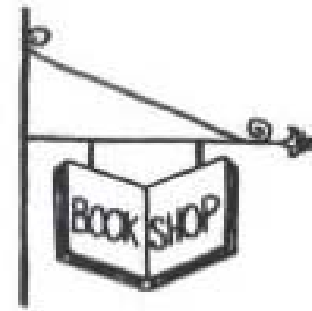
Traditional painted hanging signs on simple unobtrusive brackets will be encouraged where they replace a larger sign or are otherwise deemed appropriate.

Internally illuminated box signs will not be permitted and the Council will promote the gradual removal of those which already exist.

Diagram 5: Example of an inappropriate Small Box Sign



Diagram 6: Example of Traditional Hanging Sign, which will be encouraged in appropriate locations within Halton.



There should normally be **not more than one hanging sign per building**. It should be carefully positioned to take into account the architectural design of the building and should be positioned at fascia level.

Projecting signs should not harm visual amenity by being of appropriate materials, size and lettering. The Council will discourage bulky internally illuminated signs projecting at fascia level or above.

There should be a minimum clearance of 2.4 metres between the bottom of the sign and walkway beneath.



Photo 6: Good example of a traditional hanging sign, which has been carefully positioned and adds to the visual amenity of the building.

6.10 Further Information

It should be noted that all shop fronts, projecting signs and illuminated signs will need formal consent. The appropriate application forms can be obtained from the Planning Department.

It should also be noted that Building Regulation Consent may be required, and the appropriate forms can be obtained from the Building Control.

In addition to this, any signage proposed on or within the boundaries of a Listed Building will need consent under Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. For further information please contact the Planning Department.

All contact details are provided within the Appendix.

7.0 Security

Security should be achieved without spoiling the character or appearance of a building; otherwise the shopping area as a whole may become unattractive to customers, whose trade is vital to the continued viability of shopping. Security measures should always form an integral part of the design of a shop front and should not simply be "added on" as an after thought. One of the most contentious aspects of commercial frontage security is the installation of roller shutters.

7.1 Grilles and Shutters

The proliferation of solid roller shutters conveys an image that an area is prone to damage attracts graffiti and prevents 'window shopping'. They will jeopardise efforts to promote and diversify the evening economy and preclude natural surveillance by passers by.

There is a general presumption against the use of solid lath roller shutters as their horizontal emphasis is invariably at odds with the scale and detailing of many buildings. Solid external roller shutters will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, as they create a hostile frontage and can attract vandalism and graffiti.

Roller grilles will be preferred and roller shutters only considered if they; are painted to complement the shop front, do not obstruct architectural detail and the shutter housing and guidance channels are concealed and /or painted to match the shop front.

The use of perforated roller grilles and see-through lath shutters which allow for the spillage of light onto the street and generally enhance the streetscene should be used wherever possible.

Imaginative use of spot lighting across the shutters can be used in appropriate

locations to reduce blankness and increase security.

Diagram 7: Examples of good and bad shutter mechanisms.

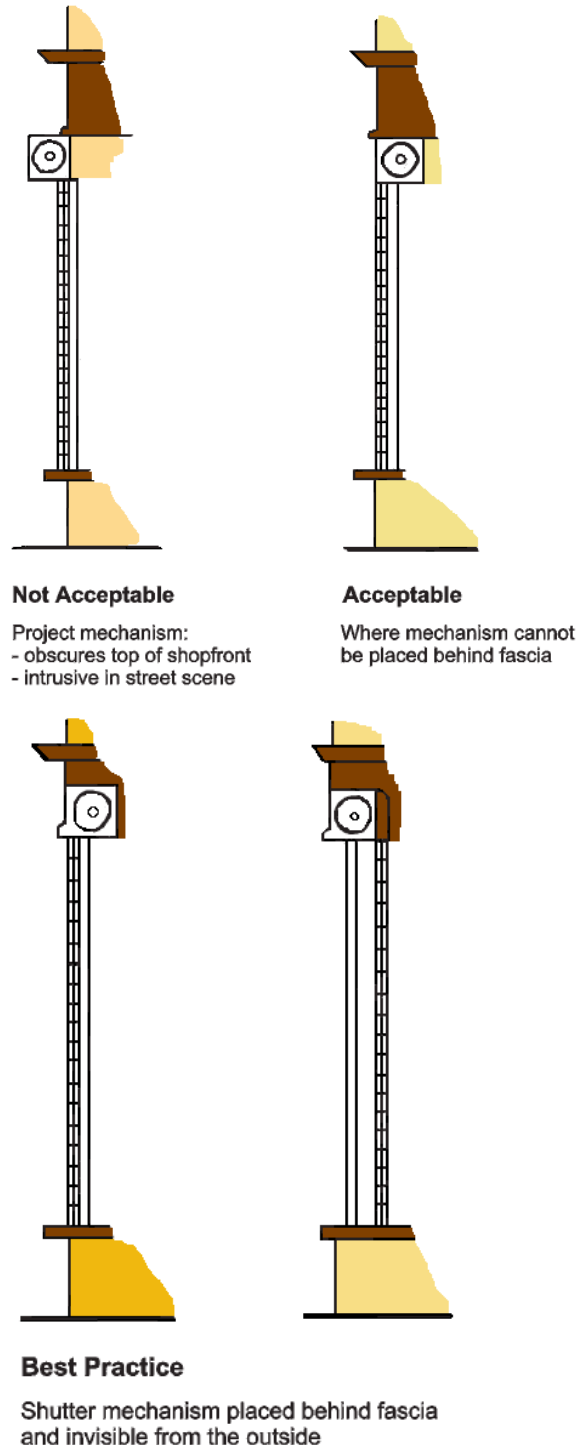




Photo 7: Good example of shutter use, where the interior of the shop is still visible and can continue to add to the street scene, and the shutters are painted to complement the rest of the shop unit.

7.2 Designing Out Crime

Well-lit interiors, visible internal CCTV systems, and adequate locks and alarms, including alarmed glass, can all reduce the risk to vulnerable premises without significant detriment to the street-scene.

Stall risers can be reinforced to protect against ram-raiding, and should be used in lieu of anti-raiding bollards that contribute to street clutter and are therefore discouraged.

7.3 Further Information

The Designing for Community Safety SPD provides further guidance on security issues and the techniques to design out crime. This document can be obtained free of charge from the Council's website or purchased in a hard format from the Planning Department, contact details have been provided in the Appendix.

The Police Architectural Liaison Officer can provide free advice on techniques to design out crime at an early stage, contact details have been provided in the Designing for Community Safety SPD.

8.0 Signage

This section looks at other signage that is abundant around the Borough. The Council recognises the need for owners to publicise their businesses, however some signage can have a detrimental effect on the visual amenity of the area, and can cause highway dangers.

8.1 Free-Standing Signs and A-Boards

The use of freestanding signposts and A-Boards and associated displays can generate a cluttered street scene when seen in context with existing street furniture.

The use of 'A' Boards and freestanding signs placed on the highway will not normally be permitted. However, the Council may consider the provision of a shared advertisement display, if this could be sited so as not to cause an obstruction and if constructed and designed to be visually acceptable.

A license will need to be obtained from the Council to use the public highway for advertising purposes, in addition to gaining Advertisement Consent. Contact details for the Highways and Transportation department can be found in the Appendix.

8.2 Fly Posting/Temporary Signs on Street Furniture

Fly posting and temporary signs on street furniture will not be permitted under any circumstances and will be removed by the Council with the costs recharged to the offender.

8.3 Directional Signs

The Council may allow exceptions in the case of well-designed sign posting schemes to provide adequate directions to locations of key importance providing that:

- they are visually acceptable, and of a high quality;

- they do not cause an obstruction or endanger public safety;
- it can be proved that it is difficult for customers to find the premises and that it is not simply for advertising purposes; and
- they formally agree to remove signage once they are no longer required.

Each proposal will be judged on its own merits, and will require a license from the Council if highway land is to be used, in addition to Advertisement Consent.

8.4 Vehicle Displays

Signage on commercial vehicles is perfectly acceptable and integral to the promotion of business and services. However, the Council will **not allow signage on vehicles, which are predominately used for the purpose of advertising rather than for transportation.** These are often vehicles, which are left in fixed positions or relocated infrequently, have large disproportionate hoardings attached and are primarily used for advertising.

8.5 Temporary Signs

Temporary signage may be tolerated if the type of sign is in keeping with the character of the surrounding area, it does not create unacceptable clutter and the sign's necessity is proven. However, banner or plastic hoarding signs will not normally be acceptable in any circumstances, except for very short term advertising but will not be acceptable if affecting a listed building or in a conservation area. Formal agreement to remove the signage and fixtures will also be required.

9.0 Advertisement Hoardings

The Council recognises that advertisement hoardings are an accepted way of advertising for many purposes, but they must not be visually dominant and obtrusive.

Advertisement hoardings are not acceptable in residential areas, in open countryside, or in conservation areas.

The display of advertisement hoardings can only be controlled in the interests of 'amenity' and 'public safety'. In assessing an advert's impact on 'amenity', consideration must be had to its effect on the appearance of the building or in the area where it is to be displayed. In considering 'public safety', an assessment will be made as to a sign's impact on the safe use of any form of transport and pedestrians.

Free standing or wall mounted advertisement hoardings will only be allowed in primarily industrial and some commercial areas providing that it:

- Does not have an adverse impact on the visual amenity of the area (it is out of scale, creates a cluttered environment or blocks important/attractive views).
- Does not cause an obstruction or endangers public safety.
- Is temporary to screen large-scale development site during the duration of building works if it does not cause an obstruction or endanger public safety.
- Fits in with any environmental improvement scheme or urban regeneration scheme proposal.
- Is not in the proximity of underground or overhead utility services.

Applicants will be expected to provide landscaping details for any proposal for new advertisement hoardings, where the Council considers this to be necessary in the

interests of visual amenity. This will be maintained thereafter by the developer, or by the Council on payment of a commuted sum.



Photo 8: An example of an advertising hoarding, which does not have adverse impact on the area, does not cause an obstruction and advertises the redevelopment of a major regeneration site.

It should be noted that certain types of advertisement benefit from 'Deemed Consent' under the Town & Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

If you are in any doubt as to whether or not your advertisement proposal requires formal consent, please contact the Council's Planning Department, at the details provided in the Appendix.

10.0 Enclosed Shopping Areas

Although express consent is not required for most works within an enclosed shopping area, the principles contained within this Guidance should also be applied to all proposed signage and shop fronts within any enclosed shopping malls, e.g. Halton Lea in Runcorn and Green Oaks in Widnes.

In addition, signage in these areas needs to be sensitive to the reduced natural daylight and the closer proximity that the fascia signs may be to the public.



Photo 9: Green Oaks enclosed shopping area, where the principles of this guidance will be encouraged to be applied.

11.0 Access

The Disability Discrimination Act imposes a positive duty on 'service providers' to make adjustments to the way in which they provide the service in question and to the premises on which they provide it.

Therefore, when installing new shop fronts or altering existing, **appropriate provision should be made for the disabled, elderly and those people with prams or push-chairs and wheelchairs to all principal public entrances/exits.**

Enabling a disabled person to enter a building does not just require a ramp for access. A poorly thought out entrance can prevent some people from entering the building. The design of entrances should allow safe and easy access to the building. There are three key elements:

- Design of the principal entrance.
- Ramps and raised footpaths
- Entrance doors

11.1 Design of the principal entrance

Entrances to buildings should be:

- placed in a logical relationship with the routes that serve them;
- easily distinguishable from the façade; and
- made accessible by avoiding flights of steps to doorways, any steps which are provided should have handrails both sides and where possible a ramp.

As a general rule the use of secondary accesses for the disabled should be avoided. A good quality access, suitable for all, brings benefit to all users. Forcing the disabled to use a secondary or second class entrance can be regarded as a form of discrimination. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where the secondary access approach is the only practical one to take.

11.2 Ramps and raised footpaths

Where a ramp is proposed:

- they should be marked by tactile and visual signs;
- the maximum gradient should be 1 in 15, though a 1 in 20 gradient is preferred;
- the maximum uninterrupted gradient length is 6m;
- a level platform should be provided to allow for rest where a ramp longer than 6m is proposed, however any level changes should be identified by means of colour change and texture;
- ramps should be on firm and even surfaces, be non-slip and non-reflective;
- ramp width should be 1.8m to enable two wheelchairs to pass; and
- rails should be a contrasting colour to their surroundings and should be extended past the top and bottom of stairs and ramps and studs should be inserted in handrails to indicate the top and bottom of stairs and ramps;

11.3 Entrance doors

Doorways should:

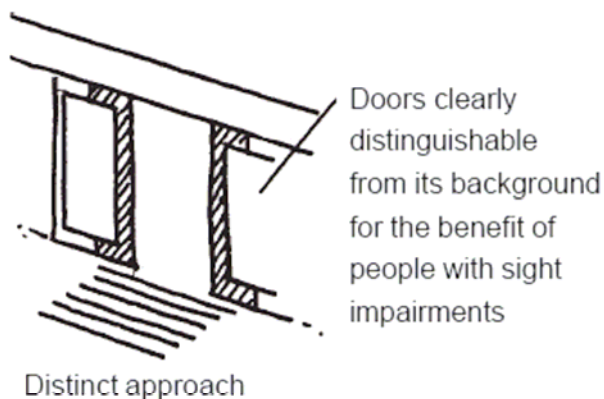
- have a minimum clear opening width of 1000mm;
- be obvious through the use of contrasting colour, texture (including tactile paving) or lighting;
- ensure adequate space for access and manoeuvring on both sides of the entrance;
- have a level threshold or if this is not possible a ramped approach to an entrance should be designed with a gradient that is as gentle as possible, or if space is limited on existing buildings a short rise lift may be appropriate;
- be adequately signed with higher lighting levels at the entrance;
- have a door entry system that is accessible to deaf and hard of hearing and

people who can not speak, which should be fitted at an accessible location;

- avoid being made completely of glass or other transparent materials. Where these are used, they should be clearly defined through the use of manifestations (a sign or logo at least 150mm high) on the glass at two levels 850mm to 1000mm and 1400mm to 1600mm; and
- ensure the door mechanism can be opened with the minimum force and be regularly maintained, for example automatic sliding doors provide good access for a disabled person, however they must remain open for a slow moving person to pass. Revolving doors or doors with strong spring closures should be avoided.

design and the guidance provided by this section have been taken into account.

Diagram 8: A good example of an automatic doorway which is clearly distinguishable, has a distinct and level approach and does not impose onto the highway or footpath.



11.4 Further Information

Designers should consult the Council's Access Officer (Building Control) for further information relating to access.

Attention should be given to Part M of Building Regulations, which provides more detailed guidance on making reasonable provision to ensure that buildings are accessible and usable.

All applicants will be encouraged to submit an access statement with their planning application, demonstrating how inclusive

Appendix: Contacts and Useful Information

General information

To access a downloadable copy of the Planning Policy Guidance notes or Planning Policy Statements detailed in Section 2, or for further general planning information visit the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website at www.odpm.gov.uk or for a hard copy contact the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by telephone on 0870 1226 236.

Outdoor Advertisements and Signs, published by the Department of the Environment, and Planning for Town Centres: Guidance on Design and Implementation tools are also available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

To access a downloadable copy of Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, which provides more detail about the control of advertisement visit the HMSO website at <http://www.legislation.hmsso.gov.uk> or for a hard copy contact The Stationery Office (TSO) by telephone on 0870 600 5522, by fax on 0870 600 5533 or by email at book.orders@tso.co.uk

Design at a Glance: A quick reference to national design policy, Design Review and The Value of Good Design: how buildings and spaces create economic and social value can be downloaded free of charge from the CABE website at <http://www.cabe.org.uk/publications/> and The Urban Design Compendium produced by English Partnership and the Housing Corporation can be ordered online free of charge from English Partnerships at www.englishpartnerships.co.uk

Further information on the Secured By Design initiative, including details relating to the standards required for a development to receive Secured By Design accreditation may be found at www.securedbydesign.com

For further information regarding any development which may affect a historic building or conservation area 'Building In Context' will be able to provide advice. It is available from English Heritage and the Commission of Architecture and the Built Environment and can be downloaded free of charge from <http://www.cabe.org.uk> or for a hard copy contact English Heritage at: Customer Services Department, PO Box 569, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 2YP, Tel: 0870 333 1181, Fax: 01793 414 926

Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide (ODPM 2003), is available from ODPM Publications and can be ordered by phone on 0870 1226 236, fax on 0870 1226 237 or email on odpm@twoten.press.net. It is also available to download at <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

To access a downloadable copy of 'By Design, Urban Design in the planning system: Towards Better Practice' and 'Safer Places', documents relating to urban renewal, urban design and creating sustainable communities, and general planning information visit The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister website at www.odpm.gov.uk. You can find out about the planning system and how it works at www.planningportal.gov.uk or www.planningoffice.co.uk

Local information

For advice relating to submitting a planning application, for pre-application discussion or to purchase a copy of this SPD or any other SPD contact:

Planning
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061

Fax: 0151 471 7304

Email: dev.control@halton.gov.uk or forward.planning@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further highways or transport information is required, please contact the:

Highways Division
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061

Fax: 0151 471 7521

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

If further access information is required, or information relating to building control please contact the;

Building Control Consultancy
Environment Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Rutland House
Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7 2GW

Tel: 0151 424 2061.

Email: building.control@halton.gov.uk

Website: www.halton.gov.uk

