



# Chard

*Draft Supplementary Planning Document*

## Shop Front Design Guide

November 2021



# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE



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Images on front cover and historical images throughout supplied by

- Historic England
- Chard Museum
- Community Heritage Access Centre - C.H.A.C
- Contributors to Chard History FaceBook Group.

**Preface**

This design guidance has been prepared in support of the policies contained within the South Somerset Local Plan 2006 - 2028 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Policies from the Local Plan to be considered:

- EQ2: General Development
- EQ3: Historic Environment

Having been subject to consultation, it carries the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance under the terms of Planning Policy Guidance note 12.

Whilst the initial principles set out in this booklet apply throughout the district, it is not intended they should be treated as blueprints. This document has been specifically tailored to be used within the locale of Chard Town Centre, concentrating on the evidence of shop fronts remaining and the historical records to prepare the principles.

Good Design Principles are offered as guidance to help towards achieving successful designs for shop fronts and street scapes.

Each subsequent proposal put forward by shop owners for planning and/or Listed Building Consent will be judged on its own merits. Good contemporary designs which are appropriate and relate well to their surroundings are as likely to be supported as strongly traditional designs.

An outline of information required for Planning Permission is within the Appendix to this document.



1. View to the East along Fore Street, early 1900's  
2. View at Cornhill crossroads, looking East, 1890  
3. View to the West from the bottom of Fore Street, 1930's  
4. View to the South along Holyrood Street, 1950s

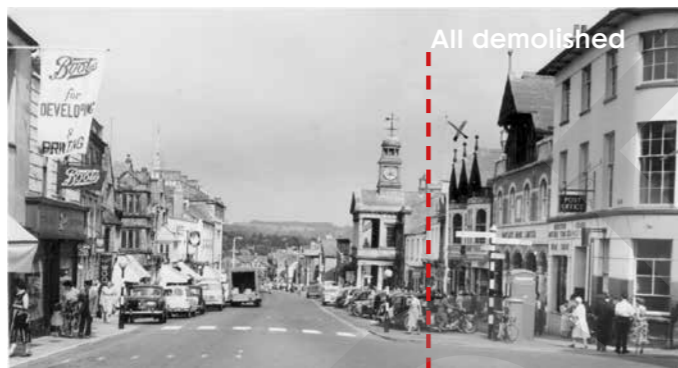
## 1. INTRODUCTION

### The Purpose of the Document

Poorly designed and maintained shop frontages tend to create a run-down appearance of not just the individual buildings, but of whole streets and areas and this can have a negative effect on the visiting public's perception of an area's economic health.

It is not difficult to understand why commercial activity performs poorly in such areas.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the designs of new shop fronts as well as for alterations, replacement and restoration of existing shop fronts, both in historic and contemporary settings. It does not aim to suggest precise ways of designing or to discourage imaginative and innovative new design, rather to encourage a sensitive approach to shop front design. The guidance notes aim to set out basic principles of good shop front design, to help create a town wide attractive identity for Chard.



Fore Street 1950's - looking east



Fore Street today - looking east

### Using this Guide

Owners are encouraged to use this document as a supplement to their own research and to establish the best design approach to suit their business and the building they occupy..

There is a wealth of reference material for Chard, held by bodies willing to share archives. Questions to address when considering initial approaches to the shop front area:

- Is the building listed?
- Is the building in a Conservation Area?
- Are there any surviving historical features to be revealed that ought to be preserved?
- Would a more creative design approach be appropriate or desirable?

If undertaking alteration works, owners are encouraged to employ a designer to assist them.

Designers can use this guide as a checklist, using relevant sections to assist in achieving the best design options for the client/shop owner.

Thorough research into the historic context of the building and character of the street, as well as ample consideration of how to complement the building and the street scape with the new design will lead to a successful shop front.

Furthermore, confirming what permissions are required and investigating the existing building fabric, looking for evidence of previous design elements which could be repaired and/or incorporated will produce desirable results and enhance the street scene.



*All high street shop frontage should be of a reasonable standard rather than looking run down. ...*

*A pride should be taken in shop fronts....*

*Shops fronts should be sympathetic to entire buildings in our high street, Guildhall, Lloyds, Tudor buildings ...*

*The town centre is in need of a face lift...The high street needs to be visually appealing to draw in visitors ..... renovating the now many empty units.*

*Encouraging artisan trades into the town would be a huge leap forward. ....*

*I would like Chard Town Shops to be presented clean, not tired with missing letters and to not appear down at heel. The shops could and should be able to make the most of the history available ....*

*.....Some shops are perfectly fine if you know them well, but if trying a new place, something that looks unkempt is discouraging...*

*A storefront has to be eye catching to draw attention. It should be showing something aspirational, that intrigues you to find out more,..... Window displays should be simple and modern, displaying the products on offer and not overstimulating.....*

A selection of comments taken from initial public consultation in Chard October 2021

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## Purpose of a Shop front

The term 'shop front' is used as a short-hand for the complete assembly of entrance display window(s), frame and signage that we are all familiar with. Frontages are a highly visible part of a town centre's physical fabric, most of the buildings in these areas contain a shop front on the ground floor which is the principal focus of attention in the direct line of sight for people in the street.

Their outward appearance plays a key role in our perception of a street or wider area. A high standard of shop front, whether traditional or modern, gives a favourable first impression of both the business behind the shop front and the area the shop is located in.

Individuals who participated in the initial consultation on Chard's shop fronts (October 2021) reinforced the premise that, for the business, the shop front, its signage and window display give potential customers an indication of the quality of the goods and services on offer.

## Visual Frame

The shop front is an integral part of the frontage of a building fulfilling the following multi purposes

- To advertise the presence of the shop
- To project an image for the business inside
- Providing an attractive welcome and a framed area for the display of goods and services
- The surrounds to the windows act as a visual frame to the display, the impact of which is enhanced by its setting within an attractive shop front.
- Providing natural light into the shop.
- Providing a strong visual and physical support for upper storeys contributing to the architectural appearance of the whole building frontage.

Albeit designed to attract attention the effectiveness of a shop front is ultimately dependent upon the quality of its design and the display within its windows. Poor quality, badly proportioned and discordantly designed shop fronts will let down the display and project a poor image for the shop.

## Potential within change

Retail is a dynamic activity with premises subject to frequent changes in response to the fashion of branding and image. Some premises can be subject to regular refurbishment to accommodate changes of tenant

The pressure of commercial competition results in retailers feeling the need to 'shout' to advertise their presence, often with little consideration given to the wider visual impact. Garish colours, attention seeking oversized or over-illuminated signage, excessive advertising can result in unattractive, uninviting shops and streets, which do not encourage shoppers or other businesses to invest.

Thus by their actions, businesses are inadvertently counteracting what they are trying to achieve.

In contrast to garish shop fronts, the projection of an image of quality and confidence can be achieved by careful design which shows respect for the characteristics of the building and its street scape. If it is well-proportioned, well-designed and respectful to its surroundings, the shop front and associated signage are more likely to make a positive first impression.

It is recognised that towns with attractive, locally distinctive and well-maintained shopping centres have a better prospect of retaining, or even improving, their economic well-being. The quality of shop fronts has therefore a significant role to play in attracting inward investment to towns and is a major contributor to an area's distinctive identity and character.



Boden Street Corner - early 1900's



Boden Street Corner - 1990's



Boden Street Corner - present day

## 2.0 SHOP FRONT HISTORY

### Historic Principles

The concept of the shop front as we know it today evolved in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (the Georgian Era) using the classical architectural principles in fashion at the time. This proved to be successful in achieving a satisfactory relationship between the shop front and the building as a whole.

The various classical elements were used in a variety of ways to create a frame for the window displays and to emphasize the entrance to the shop. Since that time the same ideas of proportion and balance based upon classical orders have been used in countless adaptations and continue to inspire designers today. While this may not be the only way to design a shop front, many successful contemporary designs have their origin in the same principles.

### Design of New Shop Fronts

#### Good Design Principles

- These historic principles can be used today either for the reproduction of a traditional-style shop front for a historic setting or, by creative interpretation, as the basis for a shop front in a contemporary building.
- In all circumstances, a design which demonstrates an understanding of appropriate details and the application of the principles of proportion will be more likely to achieve a satisfactory result.
- Remember that a shop front is subject to close inspection by the public and its detailed appearance as a piece of quality construction needs to be designed with as much care as its general proportions.
- Carefully considered details and mouldings do not necessarily add much to the cost but can add considerably to an impression of quality.



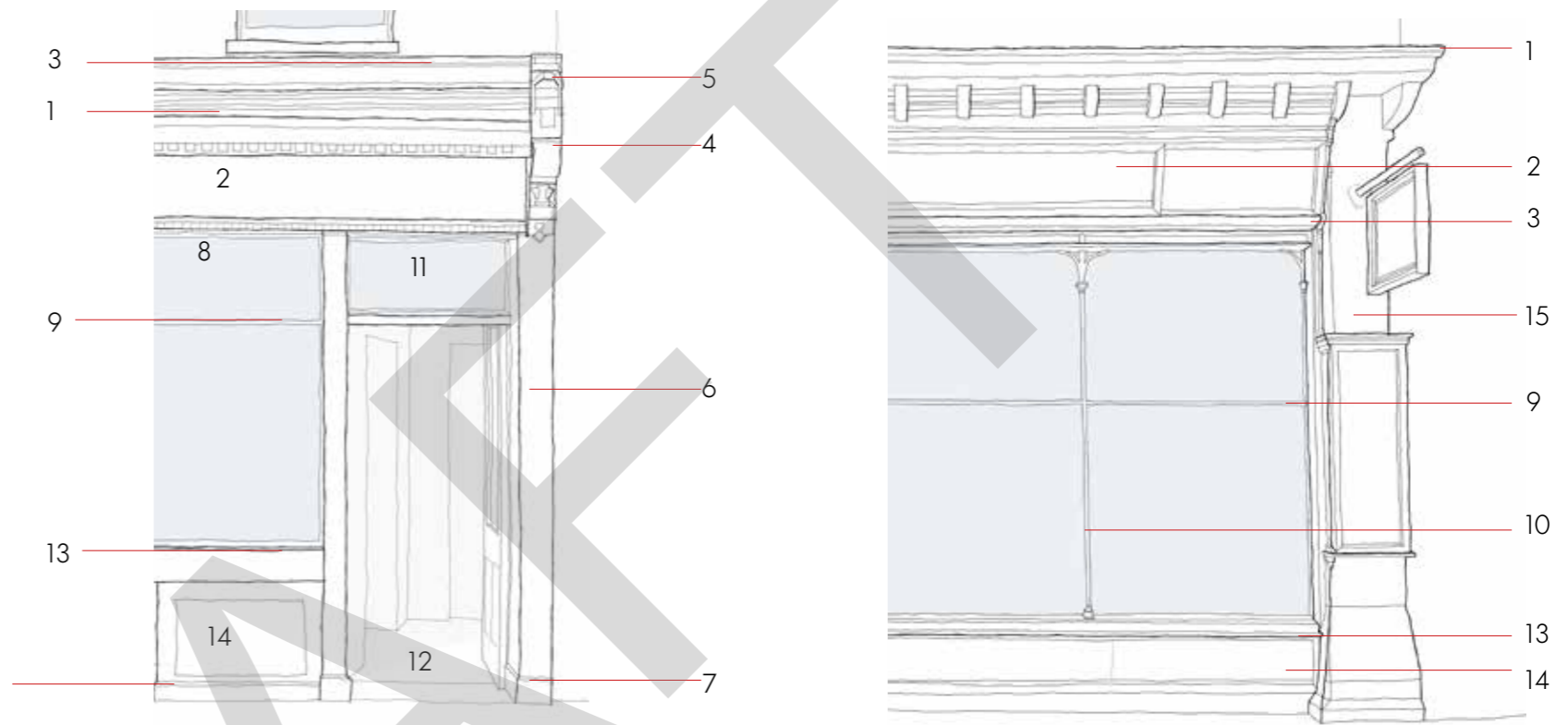
1. Early 18th century shop front in London, the projecting
2. Window giving the impression of a market stall within the street scape
3. Victorian shop front
4. Art Nouveau interpretation of shop front taken from "Modern Shop front Construction" Trevor Perry 1933
5. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century shop front still employing all original intent

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## History of Design

The visual frame traditionally consists of a **fascia** providing space for advertising protected from the weather by an overhanging **cornice** above and acting visually as the horizontal beam which supports the building above. The sides of the frame which suggest support for the fascia and cornice are often finished to represent columns either as true free standing columns or, more commonly, flat-faced **pilasters** whose design is based upon the classical column. Pilasters are used in the design to visually express the structure, to mark the separation of one building and its shop from the next and sometimes to emphasize the shop entrance.

The frame is completed by the **stall riser** which provides physical protection at ground level and gives visual weight to the base of the composition.



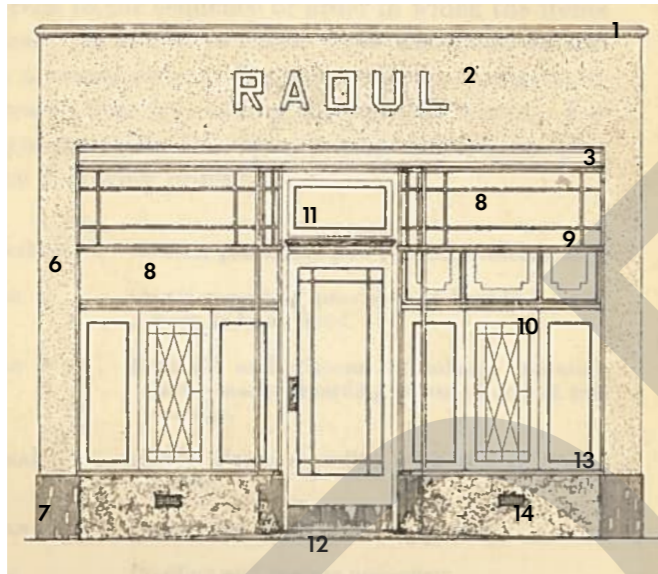
Traditional Victorian shop front Design - principles established based on the classical elements of architecture  
Some elements are repeated in both examples, some are specific to just one of the illustrations.

Above left:

- Employing all elements of the classical order:
- no vertical window bars (mullions)
- blind box sited above cornice between the capitols

Above right:

- angled fascia below the cornice
- pilasters rising to meet the fascia without capitols
- frontage of pilasters used for signage
- blind box sited below the fascia



Left: 1930's interpretation of the shop front  
Employing original intent, losing the decorative elements of the pilaster, corbel and capitol, but still framing the shop window.



Left: Late 20<sup>th</sup> century interpretation of the shop front  
Employing original intent, pilasters insinuated with a string detail, incorporating the cornice and fascia in stone within the elevation.

## Glossary

1. **Cornice:** An ornamental moulding extending horizontally, demarks head of shop frontage
2. **Fascia:** a flat board, traditionally used to support signage
3. **Blind Box:** traditionally stored blinds within the shop front
4. **Console/Corbel:** a structural piece of stone, wood or metal as a bracket delineating the horizontal extent of the front
5. **Capitol:** crowning member of a column or pilaster, providing a structural support for the cornice.
6. **Pilaster:** an ornamental element with the appearance of a supporting column articulating the extent of the frontage
7. **Plinth:** the lowest part of the base of an architectural column.
8. **Transom Light:** A glazed light above the transom.
9. **Transom:** a transverse horizontal crosspiece separating areas of a window.
10. **Mullion:** a vertical bar between the panes of glass in a window.
11. **Fan Light:** a small semicircular or rectangular window over a door.
12. **Entrance:** an opening, such as a door that allows access to a place.
13. **Cill:** a shelf or slab of stone, wood, or metal at the foot of a window.
14. **Stall riser:** In a traditional shop front, the material installed between the window cill and the ground
15. **Piers:** an upright support for a structure/ sections of structural walls between openings

## Outline History of Chard - a trading town

### Settlement History

Chard is a small town in south Somerset, close to the border with the County of Devon. It lies in a geologically complex area providing greensand, chalk and chert as building materials.

Before the borough of Chard was founded in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement, dating back to at least the Saxon period, was probably in the area round the church, known as the Old Town, where roads converge.

In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century a borough was founded, north of the Old Town. Bishop Jocelyn's charter of 1236 may mark the foundation. This granted burgage lots of an acre per person willing to build for 12d each yearly and **in 1253 a market and fairs were granted**, or the grant formalised. The burgage plots were on either side of the street now called High Street (west) and Fore Street (east) where a shambles, guildhall and market house were developed in the centre of the roadway.

It is not known whether the roadway was created as part of the Borough or was part of the pre-existing road network. Parts of a continuous flint and mortar wall, which may originally have marked the backs of the plots, survive. Aston and Leech wonder whether the town's water supply in open conduits in Fore Street (a rare survival) might date from the creation of the Borough.

Chard was on the main road between Exeter and Salisbury in the late medieval period. By 1690, traffic passed to its south through Axminster, but late 18<sup>th</sup> century turnpikes brought the main route back through the centre.

By the late medieval period the woollen cloth trade dominated the economy of the manor and Chard was an important local hub. This is made plain in the wording of a request for donations to the town following a town fire in 1577:

'Whereas in the town of Chard a great and most profitable trade hath of very long time been used in making woollen cloth to the benefit of our whole realm, and especially of all the inhabitants of our county of Somerset, to whom the said town hath been a great aid in employing many a thousand poor people within ten miles compass in working the said trade and whereas by the apt situation of the town **it hath been the convenientest town within the western part for the receipt of people trading from London to the Mount and from Devon and Cornwall and also for the holding of the Assizes**'.

The document goes on to describe 'the sudden adventure of fire' on 12 June 1577 resulting in the 'destruction of the chiefest and greatest part of the building and houses necessary for the said trade and of wool and goods, to a value of more than £9,000'. The good men of Chard had exercised diligence and the expenses of their goods 'to the uttermost' but needed help in rebuilding Chard so that the poor could be employed again.' Town fires were frequent in west country towns where thatch was a common urban roofing material. Even if the cost of the fire damage is exaggerated (which is very likely), the sum suggests a fire of catastrophic proportions.

There are records of Chard having functioned as an Assizes town on the Western Circuit in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. It seems to have been less important than some of the other Assizes towns and may have been visited only once a year, rather than twice a year. However, even if held only annually, the Assizes made a major contribution to the status and urban culture of any town, bringing to it not only the judges and lawyers who dealt with cases too serious to be heard by local magistrates, but attracting the gentry into town and encouraging, for a few days, social interaction unknown in rural areas.

Gerard's Survey of Somerset refers to the impact that hosting the Assizes had on Chard: 'it lying soe just in the judges way, by means whereof they have much amended their buildings'. In his History and Antiquities of the County of Somerset, John Collinson states that 'a public edifice stands near the middle of the principal street, which served formerly for an assize-hall; and now occasionally for a market house'.

The market house, sited in front of the inn now called the Phoenix, was the last of the buildings to survive between the burgage plots on the north and south sides of Fore Street. It was demolished in 1834 because it posed an obstruction to traffic.



Fore Street 1950's - looking east



Fore Street 2021 - looking east - north side largely unchanged bar the removal of the church and introduction of modern build below Lloyds bank



# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

The growth of Chard from a market town in the 1700's onwards can be examined through looking at the maps produced of the area, which show the development of the town from buildings set around St. Mary's Church towards the important crossroads at the meeting of Holyrood Street, Fore Street, High Street and Combe Street.

Previously called Cornhill Crossroad, this was the main meeting of the roads, that established the trading of Chard. Its importance is no longer legible within the road layout nor the way in which the public travel through the town due to

- the bollarded 'no entrance' from High Street/Fore Street into Combe Street.
- The width of Holyrood Street, as a one way street and
- the introduction of new, major roads leading from Combe St. Nicholas/Wadeford, entering Fore Street much further west and the A358 taking the traffic that would have travelled to the south from the High Street, around to the south.

Early photographs of buildings set around this area show the importance of this junction within the town. The Post Office was on the south east corner, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at a key point for messaging with use of telegrams and also a point at which collection was easy for those delivering and collecting post. This grand building was mirrored on the south west side with a building that became a bank at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century - now occupied by Greenslade, Taylor, Hunt. On the north west corner, the entrance to the building related directly to the crossroads. On the north east corner, the building remains but has been significantly altered at ground floor level, being a much more prominent shop front in the early 1900's.

With the introduction of a new road system, that can be seen in maps from 1970's onwards, the importance of the key buildings at the crossroads diminished and as such, the architecture of this area changed as well, with a number of gable fronted Victorian buildings erected at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century between the old post office corner and the Guildhall being quickly demolished and replaced with mid century buildings with integrated shop fronts at ground floor level.

The town centre of Chard has changed and could be considered to be more adjacent to the Guildhall, however the importance of the shops on Holyrood Street should be emphasised and any proposals for development at this key point of Fore Street and High Street.



Holyrood Street



Holyrood Street - pre-1890



Fore Street, 1900 New builds to the east of the Post Office



Holyrood Street junction circa 1900's  
N.P. Bank - now Greenslades in crossroad



Post office on the corner of the crossroads pre 1890



1 Fore Street  
Marching through Cornhill crossroad 1920's, when it was the main crossroads in town



1887 Map of Chard



Cornhill Crossroads 1889



Cornhill Crossroads 1920



Cornhill Crossroads 1947



Cornhill Crossroads 1961

Maps sourced from Know Your Place  
www.kypwest.org.uk

## Outline Building Principles

### The Building and its Setting

- The design of a shop front will ideally relate to the architectural design of the building into which it is to fit. It must be designed to unify the whole and not divorce the ground floor from the remainder of the building.
- The complete frontage represents the public face of the building and forms part of the street scene in its wider context. In order to avoid incongruous clashes of scale, form or colour the features of the adjacent buildings must be taken into account

### Understanding Shop Front Design

- Whether modern or traditional, a shop front with a poor design can be the consequence of cheap materials, poor workmanship and lack of thought but, more often than not poor design is due to a lack of understanding of the value and importance of the basic design elements that make the shop fronts a cohesive part of the building as a whole and the wider street scape.
- When considering works to a shop front, whether modern or traditional, a good starting point is to understand the history of shop fronts and the general design principles arising.

### Existing Shop fronts

- A good quality existing shop front which contributes positively to the character of the building and its setting should be retained whenever possible. This does not only apply to older styles; there are good examples of more recent shop fronts which are a familiar part of the local scene and add to its richness and variety. They may not necessarily be listed buildings. Bear in mind that it is often cheaper to repair an existing shop front than to replace it. Many shops retain interesting earlier features of good quality beneath later additions. These may be capable of reuse to form the basis for the refurbishment of an older shop front.

Purpose built Victorian Town Centre Terrace Building  
3 shop fronts set on the ground floor supporting 3 number house units above.



#### Left hand shop

Holistic decorative scheme.  
Considered signage.

- Pilasters topped with corbels and capitols, aligned with vertical separation in the building fabric above, separating the units horizontally.
- Cornice retained
- Recessed and angled entrance
- Fan light above door

#### Alterations

- Fascia deepened - overbearing
- Stall riser removed to allow greater window display beneath the fascia
- All window bars removed

#### created a confusing visual hybrid

- However, overall appearance of a modern shop front - with lowered window and enlarged fascia, proportions alter the frontage of the building
- Colour and lettering shows consideration given to design choice.

#### Central shop front

Original design intent remains  
Holistic decorative scheme  
Considered signage.

- Pilasters topped with corbels and capitols, aligned with vertical separation in the building fabric above, separating the units horizontally.
- Cornice and fascia retained
- Stall riser beneath high cill
- Recessed and angled entrance
- Fan light above door

#### Alterations

- Transom window bar is now at mid point.
- New door within the doorway.

#### considered to be most appropriate

- Respecting original design intent of shop front and building: proportions retained
- Signage/lettering within fascia.
- Overall impact of a considered design choice.

#### Right hand shop

Original design intent lost  
Branded corporate signage

- Pilasters topped with corbels and capitols, aligned with vertical separation in the building fabric above, separating the units horizontally.
- Cornice retained

#### Alterations

- Timbers planted over original corbel and capitol detail.
- Entire shop front removed and remodelled
- Modern design incorporated with little consideration for the building above or neighbouring shop fronts

#### considered to be an unsuitable remodelling of the original shop front.

- No response in new design to the neighbouring frontages
- No response to the original building
- oversized fascia in contrasting colours overpowering shop front.

## 3.0 ELEMENTS OF SHOP FRONT DESIGN

### Cornice and Fascias

Of all the parts of a Shop front the fascia probably has the greatest effect upon the street scene, functioning as part of the frame for the display, providing a place to advertise the name of the shop.

Fascia designs should suit the character of the building as a whole, the style and proportion relating to the architecture.

Fascias are generally topped by a projecting cornice, which provides a visual stop to the shop front on the elevation. It also serves the practical purpose of providing weather protection for the signage below.

### Good Design Principles

- New Shop front designs should incorporate a fascia unless a high quality unified design for a particular situation can be shown not to require one.
- New oversized fascias should not be applied on top of existing ones. The resulting appearance is generally undesirable and can eventually lead to the decay of original material behind.
- The fascia must not obstruct other significant elements of the building. The top of the fascia or cornice should be clear of the first floor window cills.
- Fascia dimensions should be proportionate to the size of the shop front and building. The fascia should not be too deep. Traditional fascias are usually no more than 380mm deep. As a guide; keep the fascia and cornice element of the Shop front to less than one quarter of the height of the whole Shop front.
- A fascia usually requires a visual "cap" in the form of a projecting cornice. This will also serve to protect the fascia and the Shop front from the weather.
- If there is the need to visually obscure an internal lowered ceiling, this can be done with other architectural methods, such as an opaque transom light.
- Corporate organisations should adopt their signage to fit the surroundings
- Avoid the use of projecting box fascias, whether internally illuminated or not, particularly in conservation areas and on listed buildings.



Loss of original features with the addition of a large sign. Oversailing the fascia, pilasters, and window heads.



Removal of face mounted larger boards  
Allowing re-instatement of window heads, side pilaster details.  
Introducing cornice which offers protection from weathering above the sign



Signboard applied disregarding the detail of the window cill above



Oversized Fascia sign with overly large lettering detracts from the uniformity of the streetscene.

Plastic finishes in garish colours also detract from the quality of the fascia and can make a shop front look cheap.



Two fascias applied obscuring the original design and intended position of the signage, lower set over original blind box



lead covered cornice providing protection for signage below.



Individual mounted letters set on fascia working within existing dimensions.  
Opaque transom light, used for signage.



Original angled fascia used for discrete signage, emphasised with vertical sign

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## Consoles and Pilasters

Pilasters are shallow piers or rectangular columns projecting only slightly from the building's facade wall. They function as a frame to the shop front and accentuate the subdivision of the frontage into separate units. They also provide a visual support to the fascia above.

Traditionally pilasters are made of wood, and tend to be thin and decorated. Much like their predecessors the columns, pilasters have a base, often reflecting the height of the stall riser. The top of the pilasters are finished with a projecting head: the console bracket. This will usually have the same height as the fascia and in many cases allows the latter to be installed at an angle. Console decorations tend to be elaborate in traditional designs.

It is highly recommended to retain original pilasters and repair them as required. Avoid covering them which will damage the character of the original design; reinstatement, uncovering, repairing and renewing is encouraged when any new shop front design is proposed.

## Good Design Principles

Traditional shop fronts should incorporate pilasters, with a base and a capitol.

Contemporary shop fronts should maintain the principle incorporating a clear division between shop front units, if not including a physical pilaster - using masonry piers between buildings, or piers within the shop front.



Treatment of original pilasters intended to separate shop fronts varying within adjacent shop frontages dependent upon which shop owner takes responsibility for the architectural element. The detail, if intact, should remain visible and not hidden in favour of bland over boarding matching inappropriate fascias.



stone pilaster, ornate corbel and capitol at head all remains in-situ



ornate corbel and capitol retained, inappropriate facing material placed on pilaster, with unsatisfactory detailing between old and new



timber pilaster supporting fascia, with no capitol.



Original capitol overridden with enlarged fascia.

## Stall Risers

Stall risers are the solid panels beneath the windows, generally incorporated into traditional designs. The architectural function is both to protect the base of the shop front and give it visual weight and strength as it connects to the ground.

A stall riser is also an advantage from the point of view of security in physically strengthening the shop front and reducing the size of the glazed opening.

Stall riser heights vary according to the overall proportions of the building, as well as the nature of the business and how much window display area is needed

Conversely, modern shop fronts have large expanses of plate glass, down to ground level. This approach increases the view into the shop and breaks down the barrier between inside and outside. It results in a dramatic and effective display area however, such minimalist design is generally not appropriate in parades of shops where the display areas are more conventionally framed.

It works better in internal shopping malls and for well designed modern shop fronts, in contemporary settings, not so suited to a traditional town street scape

## Good Design Principles

- Stall risers should be incorporated into designs for new shop fronts in existing historical buildings;
- Stall riser height should generally not exceed the base of the pilasters or approximately 450mm. However, there may be situations where the height could or should be increased, planning advice should be sought accordingly;
- Stall risers should be made of substantial materials and be compatible with the shop front frame and upper building.
- Where a stall riser is being replaced, the chosen material must relate to the building and its context;
- Proposed timber panelled stall risers should have properly detailed panels and not applied surface mouldings to create a panelled appearance as a substitute for proper joinery.
- The stall riser should terminate in a moulded projecting cill and a sub-cill to create a clear horizontal distinction between the window and the base

Suitable finish materials within traditional shop fronts

- timber panelling painted
- ashlar stone
- render
- brick in some situations

Further suitable within contemporary shop fronts :

- polished stone
- marbles, granites and other non-local stones
- mosaics, ceramic tiles

The following materials will not be supported and should be avoided

- rubble stone
- acrylic sheet,
- composite or tongued and grooved boards



Inappropriate material will decay quickly near ground level, creating undesirable appearance



Inappropriate decoration of panelled scheme, applied as a copy of an original stall riser. Colour emphasises the difference in design detail of window frame and planted riser



Original panelled risers stand proud of the window frame, with a protecting cill, sitting against internal structure which supports the glazing above.



rendered stall riser

## Windows and Displays

Shop front windows' primary function is to display the goods sold in the shop. However, they also allow inside activities to be seen from the outside thus enlivening the street scene and promoting natural surveillance. Varying glazing finishes, such as engraving, can add interest to the shop front's appearance and can be utilised as a high quality advertising opportunity or a chance to show off the nature of the business.

The ability to see into a shop, to determine the quality and nature of the goods on sale, is a significant driver in the footfall over the threshold of an independent business, an assertion that was underlined in the initial public consultation for this document.

Historically shop windows are subdivided by mullions and transoms, often in timber. These subdivisions reflect the proportions of the shop and the rest of the building's elevation and are in keeping with the character of the street. Additionally, this subdivision assists in the creation of human scale proportions to the frontage, gives stronger visual appearance and aids security.

Contemporary shop front windows, set within contemporary builds, tend to have large expanses of glass as a principal feature of the Shop front design; this can work well within modern shopping areas, but does lead to a lack of individual identity for towns and cities.

Shop forecourts containing an attractive display can significantly add to the appearance of a shop front and the visual interest and vitality of the street.

## Good Design Principles

- Within historic buildings, very large areas of glass are best avoided in favour of subdivided areas. Subdivision introduces the perception of human scale and can be a means of helping the design reflect the rest of the building.
- Subdivision is more successful vertically, making windows taller than wider, reflecting the scale of the building and its overall vertical proportions.
- Transom divisions should be positioned to divide the window at door height. Mullions should be positioned to line up above and below any transom divisions, appearing to run through the horizontal rail.
- Timber profiles in traditional window rails should reflect historical styles, not being rectangular in section, but moulded. Tapered, lambs-tongue or rounded sections give a more slender appearance and subtle shadow lines;
- Windows should not be used for extensive display of temporary posters: they can give a low quality image. If posters are needed, the display of a few, well positioned and designed will be more effective than filling the windows.
- The display of goods outside a shop front can look attractive if well organised, but take care to avoid displaying too much which could result in a chaotic appearance. Do not obstruct the public highway or footway with displays. Pavement displays can normally only be sited on privately owned forecourts.



The shop front offers nothing to the street scene. No visual connection, no opportunity for lighting after hours, encouraging debris to be left against facade.



Large plate glass, set within original shop front, vertical separation maintained to introduce scale



Accessible forecourt display reflecting the general appearance of the internal shop



Carved timber mullions introducing vertical lights, shadow producing depth to the frame

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## Canopies and Blinds

Canopies and blinds act to provide shelter for pedestrians and protect the shop display from damage by weather. They should not be introduced as a form of advertising space but always be functional and retractable. They can be a lively addition to the street scene if integrated within the shop front.

Premises which face north or are situated in very narrow streets should have no need for blinds.

Occasionally a canopy may be required to offer shelter to goods displayed on a private forecourt, but this should also be retractable.

## Good Design Principles

- Materials for blinds should be non-reflective. Wet-look material, shiny plastics, garish or fluorescent colours are unsuitable as additions to almost any shop front
- Design the housing for the retractable blind to form an integrated part of the shop front fascia this way the blind will relate to the form of the shop front.
- Dutch blinds are considered inappropriate on the high street since their form when open and the shape of the housing is unlikely to relate well to an existing shop front
- Proposed blinds should always be retractable when not required, ideally of a traditional roller design. Fixed blinds are generally inappropriate within the scale of the townscape
- If traditional canvas blinds and blind boxes are in place, these should be retained and preserved



Modern roller blinds set proud on a shop front; preference is to integrate a blind box above/below the cornice, not appearing as independent added 'furniture'.

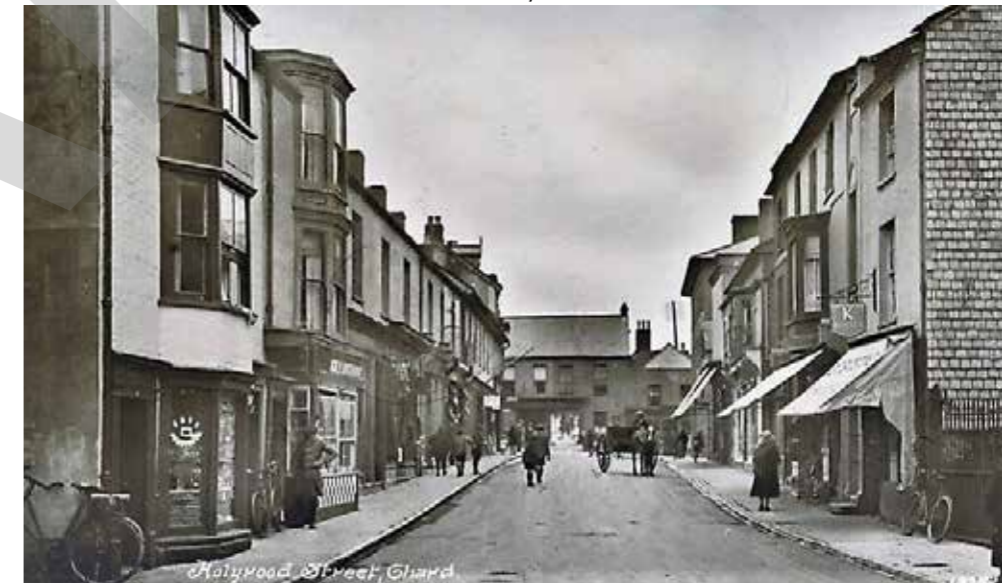
Blind boxes incorporated into fascias, hidden with inappropriate modern signage.



Dutch canopy dominating street scape and shop front  
Oversailing original shop front design.



Historical precedent for roller blinds being prominent shading/advertising device on Holyrood Street.



20th century metal shop front.  
Blind box incorporated at head of windows



Blind box installed above cornice and fascia



Example of blind advertising the shop front, working in tandem with the building design

## Signage

### Lettering Techniques

- Fascia lettering is a key component of a design and needs designing and executing carefully as an integrated part of the whole shop front, on both the fixed shop front and the hanging signs associated with the shop
- Lettering should normally be confined to the shop fascia and identify the name of the shop only. Too much lettering and information crowded onto a fascia sign greatly reduces its effectiveness and results in clutter and confusion.
- To have visual impact lettering does not need to be enormous. Over large lettering and signs can easily give a shop a poor image and appear overpowering in the street scene.
- Where a shop has no fascia the application of individual letters to the wall between ground and first floor level may be appropriate. Lettering or fixing signs above the usual shop fascia level will not normally be permitted, except in the case of some hanging signs.
- Where a business is located on an upper floor, only lettering applied directly to windows will usually be permitted. Such signs should be simply designed and not overcrowd the window area. Individual letters should be limited to 100mm in height. Generally avoid lettering and signs applied to ground floor windows.
- Hand painted sign writing on a timber fascia is the traditional method of lettering a shop front, and remains one of the most adaptable and effective. The range of styles is almost unlimited and images of great decorative interest and character can be easily achieved by a competent sign writer. Gold or light coloured letters on a dark background are effective in all lights and particularly suit traditional shop fronts.
- An image of quality can also be created with profiled wooden or cast brass letters. Flat plastic cut-out letters usually look cheap and undignified and their plain reflective surfaces are not always appropriate.

### Good Design Principles

- The style of lettering should be selected to suit the nature of the building, the content of the wording, the shop itself and its setting.
- Keep lettering in proportion to the length and depth of the fascia. A sufficient margin above and below the actual letters and space on either side are necessary to ensure the visual effectiveness of the sign.
- Take account of the distance at which the sign will be read. There is no point in large lettering if the street is narrow. In practice, 50mm high lettering can easily be read at an adequate distance in the average street. Remember, projecting lettering is hard to read at oblique angles and so may not be effective in narrow streets.
- In conservation areas and on listed buildings painted sign writing will usually be the best solution.

### House Style and Corporate Image

- Companies with multiple retail outlets will be expected to adopt a flexible approach to the design of their shop fronts and signs.
- Almost all house styles can be adapted to suit a particular situation without serious loss of a familiar identity.
- Imposition of standardised solutions which disregard the form and character of the individual building and its setting has resulted in many a poor design.



Brash branding over sailing the shop fronts - advertising taking priority



Lettering applied directly to the original fascia and sized accordingly





# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## Projecting Signs

### Projecting box signs

These will not usually be permitted in conservation areas or on listed buildings whether internally illuminated or not.

This type of sign should be limited in size to

900mm projection x 300mm deep

750mm projection x 375mm deep

A size between these dimensions

### Hanging signs

These will be in the form of a free-swinging board hanging from a projecting bracket.

### Good Design Principles

- The design of the sign and the bracket must both be of high quality. The shape of the sign will usually have a vertical emphasis but the use of a symbol rather than a board to denote the trade may be appropriate in some cases.
- Normally only one sign per building will be permitted. Hanging boards should be no larger than:
  - 600mm wide x 860mm high for two storey buildings;
  - 700mm wide x 990mm high for three storey buildings.
- The size must relate to the scale of the building, the shop front and its situation, not be too intrusive or too small to be effective.
- Hanging signs are usually best located to hang above and clear of the fascia and cornice, with the bracket mounted between the first floor and ceiling levels. Positions on or near to party walls are usually better than central positions but the nature of the building and its surroundings will be the final determinant.



street scape brought to life with vertical hanging signs

## Illumination and Lighting

- Internally illuminated hanging signs are not usually acceptable but external illumination may be included provided that it is carefully designed as part of the whole sign. In conservation areas and on listed buildings illumination may not be appropriate at all.
- External lights must be arranged to avoid the danger of dazzling passers-by and drivers of vehicles and shining into neighbours' windows.
- All signs projecting over the public footway must have at least 2.2m clearance, although there may be more flexibility in pedestrian precincts. In-situations where the footway is narrow, the maximum projection may need to be reduced to avoid an obstruction. Signs which project within 450mm of the edge of the footway will need to provide 5m clearance for vehicles.
- Generally it is preferable to illuminate the display rather than the shop front itself but it is accepted that illumination of signs and fascias will be appropriate in some situations.
- In conservation areas and for listed buildings illuminated signs will usually only be considered for premises which are open during the evenings. Lighting must be carefully and unobtrusively designed to respect the building and be appropriate to the area.
- Internally illuminated fascia signs can be visually overpowering in the street scene and project a poor image. They should only be used if strictly limited to a fascia located as an integral part of the actual shop front. They will never be acceptable spread across the whole building frontage in an uncontained manner. Careful attention to the edges of these signs is essential as exposed strips of aluminium trim will always result in a cheap and crude appearance.
- Internally illuminated fascias will not be permitted in conservation areas or on listed buildings.
- Fascias can be lit effectively with external sources, but care is needed to avoid the lights themselves becoming prominent features on the face of the building.
- Individual letters halo illuminated or internally lit can be bulky, brash and difficult to read from the side. A flat fascia sign is often easier to read and, well designed, can give a better image.



Corporate illuminated external sign projecting beyond the shop front



Corporate signage respecting the elevation with equally effective lighting



Projecting sign that overshails details on the original window



Well integrated fascia, signage and lighting designed as a whole

## Access

New shop fronts should always accommodate the needs of disabled people. Wherever possible steps should be avoided and doors arranged to be both wide enough for and capable of being opened by people in wheelchairs.

## Good Design Principles

- Level access: where possible steps should be avoided and the shop front entrance should be level and wide enough to allow entry for all users;
- Where a change of level is unavoidable, steps and ramps should be designed in line with Approved Document M of the Building regulations. Small changes in level may be able to be accommodated within the footway outside the shop; the Highway Authority for the area should be consulted in the first instance.
- Doors should be able to be operated easily by wheelchair users and those with limited strength;
- The needs of the partially sighted should be considered when designing a shop front; distinguishing glass doors within large areas of glazing is difficult for the visually impaired.
- Incorporating stall risers, glazing bars and suitable manifestation on the shop front will assist in making the facade easier to navigate.
- Forecourt displays and seating can enliven streets and will generally be permitted where it does not cause an obstruction to pedestrians. To prevent conflict, forecourts should be clearly delineated from the main pavement, allowing sufficient space for the free flow of pedestrians. Broadly speaking the required clearances are: 3m for primary pedestrian routes, where there is heavy footfall (town centres, busy shopping areas and public transport nodes), and 2m for all other pedestrian routes, where there is less footfall.
- The use of A-boards and similar type of on-street advertising should be avoided so as not to obstruct movement.
- The interior design and the shop service should also be considered, ensuring the layout is easy to navigate and providing assistance for people with hearing, visual, physical or mental impairments.

## Security

A major aspect of the shop front design is the appearance on the street scape out of opening hours, this is often governed by the security measures employed.

The ability to have a visual connection to a shop's interior through the window was considered in the initial public consultation in October 2021, to be the most important aspect of shop front design, closely followed by the window display. The consideration was that this should be available 24/7.

The character and appearance of existing shop fronts can be radically altered by the addition of external shutters, box housings, guide tracks, locking devices etc. Such alterations can have a detrimental effect upon the character of a whole street or area. A close-shuttered shopping street will present a drab, lifeless and even hostile atmosphere which, while offering a degree of security to the individual shop premises, is not in the best interests of a town's image or perceptions of safety.

There is a need for a careful balance between the provision of adequate security and the quality of the town's environment.

Historically shops suffer from a number of different forms of criminal damage: vandalism (graffiti for example), thefts and burglaries (including ram raids).

Persons involved in shop front design should be encouraged to seek guidance from their local Crime Prevention Design Adviser within Avon and Somerset Constabulary who will advise on Secured By Design (SBD [www.securedbydesign.com](http://www.securedbydesign.com)).

Security is not something that should be ignored. There will always be the need to balance the physical appearance of the built environment against the need to incorporate proportionate crime prevention measures to combat the possible risks a shop front may present. These risks may vary due to the nature of the business, its location, the built environment around it, lighting and level of activity outside of normal business hours.

## Good Design Principles

- Security measures should always be appropriate to the likely risk. Before deciding upon any one measure it is advisable to consider the security of the building as a whole taking advice from the police and insurance company.
- Always engage with South Somerset District Council for pre application advice before carrying out any work. Planning permission is required for installation, alterations or replacement of shutters or grilles on the exterior of a building, as well as alarm boxes - whilst planning is not required to replace internal shutters, listed building consent will be necessary
- All proposals will be judged on merit taking into account the need for security, the likely effect upon the Shop front and building itself, the adjacent buildings and the locality or streetscene.
- Visible and illuminated shop window displays contribute significantly to the general attractiveness of the street and permit after hours window shopping. Maintaining internally illuminated displays both in the windows and within the shop will add to light levels in the street after dark acting as an additional measure of security as well as enabling police supervision of the interior of the premises. Therefore measures which do not obscure the window display are preferred.
- The system is designed as an integral part of the shop front and does not detract from any architectural features.
- The colour finish matches the shop front.
- Planning permission and listed building consent may be granted on a personal or temporary basis in order to avoid certain security measures which may be needed for a particular business being retained when no longer required.
- Planning permission would not normally be required to replace glass unless the replacement is etched, smoked or reflective. Early shop fronts on listed buildings may contain old glass which it is desirable to retain and listed building consent will usually be needed to make changes.

## Security Measures for Shop Fronts Good Design Principles

The following security measures may be appropriate depending upon circumstances. They are listed in order of preference from the point of view of limiting their detrimental appearance on Shop fronts and shopping streets. All the measures are recognised by the Association of British Insurers although the degree of security each provides is different. It is recommended that any products considered have SBD certification

### Internal systems

#### Alarm systems

- Alarm systems can be linked directly to the police, triggered by a contact, infra-red or movement activated device.
- Care should be taken over the siting of alarm boxes. They should be visible but not intrusive and sited to be inaccessible without the use of ladders.
- Suitable locations will depend upon the nature of the individual building but just below eaves level is often the easiest and least prominent site. The boxes may be required to be painted a colour to suit the building or the setting.

#### Glazing

- Toughened, laminated or anti-bandit glass can be used in place of ordinary float glass. Ensure the frame strength is adequate in relation to the strength of the glass.

#### Internal lighting

- Secure glazing and alarms, used in conjunction with suitable lighting will allow a level of visibility into the shop for the passing public, as well as illuminating the streetscape.
- If a grille is thought to be required, it should be considered in tandem with the lighting and glazing systems.

#### A Building in use

- The use of upper floors for residential purposes can give the benefit of the presence of people on the site after hours and will help to generate activity within town centres in the evenings and at weekends which can help to reduce vandalism and crime.

#### Shutters/Grilles –

A street full of shops with external solid shutters may provide a high level of security to the front of the premises, but can create the feeling of dead space. This in turn discourages passers by, reducing natural surveillance opportunities.

This type of fitting, while probably the most secure, is the most visually intrusive and unattractive when in a closed position and will be most likely to result in an unwelcoming out of hours appearance.

Approval will not normally be granted for this type of fitting unless very special circumstances prevail. Any planning permission granted is likely to be temporary. Where shutters are considered necessary, there are options considered preferable to **solid** external shutters.

#### Internal Grilles

- Internal portcullis grilles of open mesh will maintain the effectiveness of the window display and permit visual security. Careful attention must be paid to the arrangement of guide tracks and housing especially in the case of listed buildings. The housing may possibly be fitted either above the ceiling lining or below a stall riser to keep it out of sight. Always use the lightest grille appropriate and have it finished to a suitable colour. Dark colours are less prominent.
- Combined with internal lighting, this is an effective way of securing both the shop and providing life to the street scape.

#### Removable external mesh grilles or wooden shutters

- These are generally secured to fixed channels over the shop front, removing the need for boxed housing. The shutters are removed during trading hours, or, if wooden, folded back when not in use.
- Care must be taken with the design of fixings to ensure they do not damage the architectural character of the shop front nor leave dangerous projections.
- Externally mounted solid timber shutters will be suitable only in a very few traditionally designed shop fronts.

#### External portcullis rolling grilles of open mesh

- Very careful attention must be paid to the siting of guide tracks, fixing devices and above all the box housing and motor control gear in order to satisfactorily integrate them into the design of the shop front as a whole; but, if set within the window line, and taken to above the stall riser, this method can be employed as a successful external shutter.
- The housing will have to be placed behind the fascia and guide tracks fitted within window mullions. The system is unlikely to be appropriate for a listed building unless a shop front replacement is agreed and the device is carefully designed as an integral part of the new front.
- The grille mesh should be rectilinear in form and the grilles should not obscure shop front details such as pilasters and stall risers but be designed to fit between and protect the glass areas.

#### External translucent rolling shutters

- These follow the form of the rolling grille but with glazed panels introduced to form a complete screen. The window display remains reasonably visible and visual security is maintained.
- Requirements similar to those for external portcullis grilles will apply to the detailing of this system but it is unlikely to be appropriate on listed buildings or in conservation areas and only in special circumstances elsewhere.

#### Other Measures

- Reinforced stall risers constructed into the base of the shop frontage will reduce the risk of ground level attacks or ram raiding type incidents. In addition, how the stall riser is incorporated into the window is important. Ledges at the top of the stall riser that can then be used as seating, should be discouraged ad hoc, these can become congregating points and may lead to anti-social behaviour and other associated offences
- Recessed doorways should be avoided in new shop fronts if possible

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## EXTERNAL GRILLES

Solid grilles present bland and closed street images after hours: **Not desirable**



A fine mesh external shutter, with sufficient internal lighting allows the interior of the premises to remain visible after dark. By day however the appearance of this type is similar to a solid shutter.

Grille protecting stall riser, allowing visual clarity, preferable to solid full depth grilles, though not desirable



External security grilles set within the window frontage of a Grade II listed building, allowing visual access to shop window combined with successful way of securing a recessed entrance. The shop signage and fascia extends down in front of the blind box, but retains acceptable proportions in relation to the front elevation.



## INTERNAL GRILLES

permitting the shop front to be visible  
Varying degrees of visibility through to the interior.



Internal grilles set behind glazing, that disallow visual access - **less desirable**



Internal grilles that provide visual connectivity to shop interior: **preferable security option**



Internal lighting proves effective, illuminating window displays behind protective mesh grille - allowing illumination of the street scene and adding to the sense of a safer environment after dark: **ideal security option**

### Materials for Shop fronts

The selection for materials for a shop front must always take account of the style and design of the proposed front, the building in which it is to be fitted and its setting.

**Do not use too many different materials in the design.**

It is generally preferable to use non-reflective finishes. Wherever possible avoid the use of plastics, mosaics, polished stone, ceramic tiles, smoked or mirror glass.

### Timber

- The traditional material for shop fronts. The most versatile and appropriate material for all situations, whether a historic setting, a conservation area, a listed building or for a contemporary design. Infinite choice available in colour and design.
- Should be finished with paint as a general rule. Varnish or stain may occasionally be suitable but not in conservation areas or for listed buildings.
- Avoid tropical hardwoods and all timber from non-sustainable resources.
- Timber can normally be inexpensively altered and easily repainted for a fresh look.

### Stone

- Appropriate in all parts of South Somerset but usually only in the form of smooth ashlar. Random or rough rubble finishes are not suited to shop fronts. Take care with the selection of the type of stone. Use stone types local to the area for preference.
- For listed buildings and in conservation areas full details of the stone coursing, bedding, jointing, pointing and mortar mix will be required.

### Render

- Only suitable for stall risers or, if executed to the highest possible standard to emulate ashlar stone. Consider using an appropriate selfcoloured mix rather than relying on painting with its long-term maintenance commitment.

### Brick

- May look out of place unless the building itself is constructed of brick.
- Each opening in a stone or brick building needs the wall's means of support above to be visibly expressed, whether as a beam or lintel or some form of arch.

### Aluminium - suitable for Contemporary fronts

- Not normally considered suitable for listed buildings nor traditional historic frontages.
- Much used for modern shop fronts but avoid the use of self-coloured and anodized aluminium whenever possible. Powder coated finishes have a much better appearance and are available in a wide range of colours.
- Aluminium cladding is not suitable for Chard shop fronts

### Steel suitable for Contemporary fronts

- Generally avoid the use of unfinished galvanized steel. Powder coating is available and can provide a good finish in a wide colour range.
- Steel plate cladding is not suitable for Chard shop fronts

### Chrome plate, stainless steel and other polished metals

- Usually too hard and shiny in appearance but can be suited to very specific design solutions.

### Plastics

- Much used for modern signs, fascias and lettering. Care is needed in design and selection to avoid a thin, harsh, shiny appearance and with detailing the finish at the edges of sheets.
- Not usually appropriate in conservation areas or for listed buildings.

### Flooring

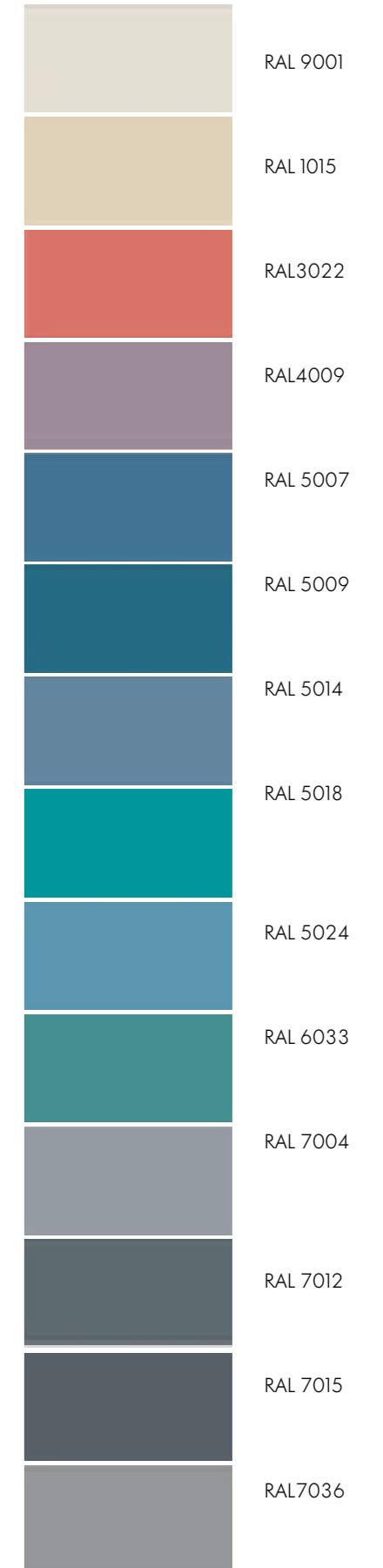
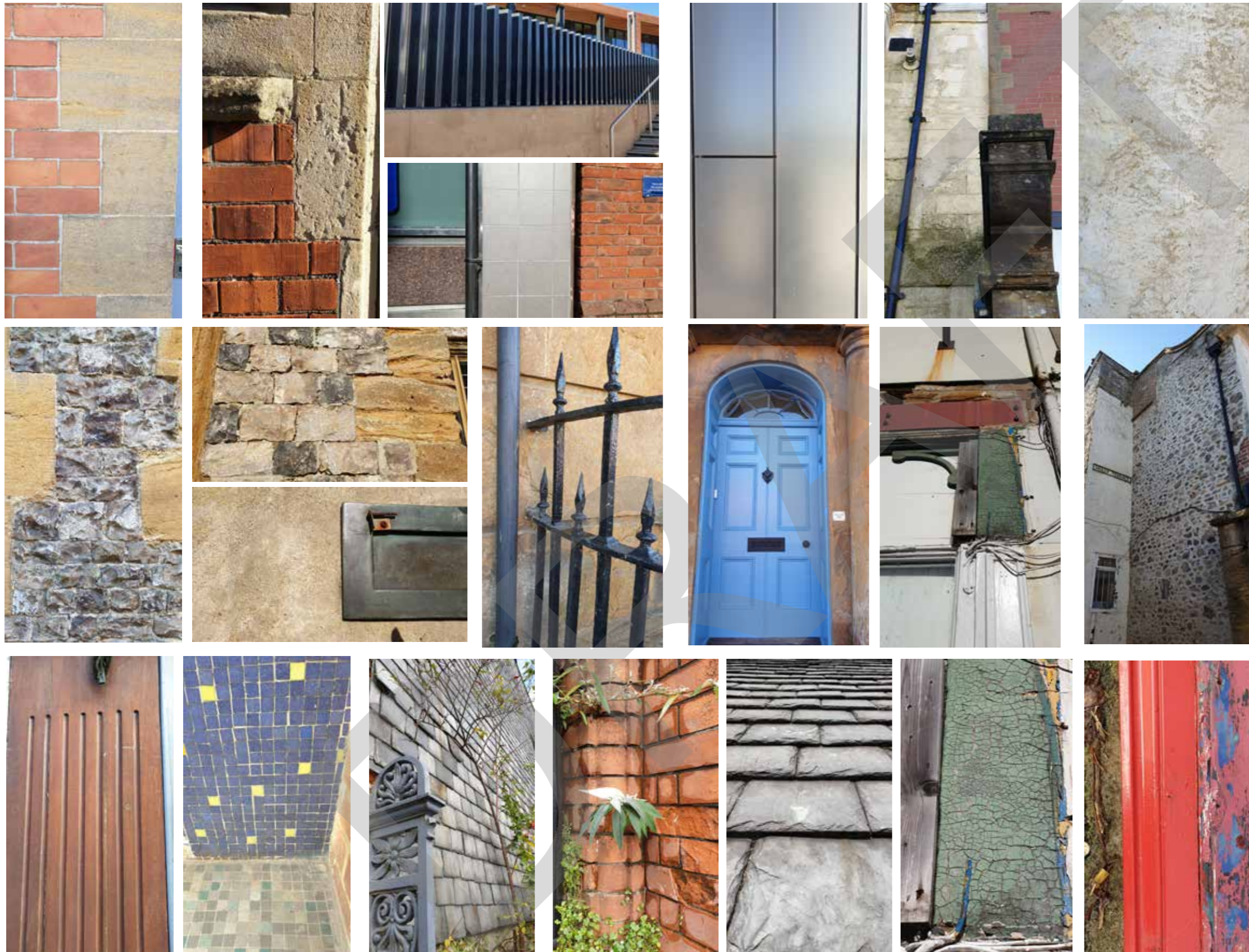
- Consider terrazo, marble, tiles: any material that contrasts with the external pavement

### COLOUR

- Shop front colour should have regard for the colour qualities of the building as a whole and that of neighbouring buildings and their setting, in order to avoid clashing contrasts.
- The local distinctiveness of a place is partly determined by its colours; the colours of the surrounding landscape, the colour of local materials and local traditions of paint colour, all contribute to a local sense of place which can be strengthened by continuity of use. Shop fronts can add to this, perhaps by the use of a locally distinctive colour or variation upon it in some situations. Particularly on a listed building or within a conservation area, some colours may not be appropriate. Corporate colour styles may need to be modified to take this into account. Listed building consent may be needed for repainting a listed building: seek advice.
- Selecting colour requires skill and judgement. This is particularly so for strong colours which well selected may add vitality and interest to a street, or appear too strident and intrusive if chosen without care.
- Dark coloured shop fronts will often help to highlight the display area especially if well lit. Fluorescent colours will be out of place almost everywhere.

# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

Materials and Colours found within Chard - with a suggestion of complimentary tonal colour palette.



# CHARD SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE

## CHECKLIST

The following checklist should be used to ensure good design principles have been followed:

### Shop front relationship with building and wider street

- The shop front should reflect and relate in scale, proportion and architectural style to the building in which it is set and to the wider parade of shops;
- The fascia proportions should respect the rest of the shop front and the building in which it is set. It should not be too deep, wide or project forward from the face of the building. It should be positioned consistently with adjoining buildings;

### Positive Shop front character

- Where an existing shop front is to be retained and restored or an original shop front to be reinstated, surviving historic features should be preserved and restored in a sensitive manner;
- Where a new shop front is installed, it should draw particular attention to the component parts of good traditional shop fronts;
- Pilasters and consoles, decorated if appropriate, should be used to support the fascia as they form an important part of the overall shop front design;
- Stall risers provide a strong visual base to the shop window and add to security and protection of the window display;
- Entrance doors should be recessed and have a solid lower panel to match stall riser height.

### Attractive display windows

- Within the existing buildings of Chard town centre, the shop front window display should be subdivided by vertical and horizontal elements to avoid large expansions of glass and create a well-proportioned frontage. Glazing bars assist in creating visual relief, rhythm and an attractive design;
- Obscured panels filled with advertising should be avoided.

### Uncluttered shop signage /advertisements

- Generally signage should be kept to a minimum, avoiding visual clutter, and integrated into the Shop front. It should serve to advertise the goods and services offered whilst respecting the character of the building and street scene;
- Projecting signage should be small, positioned at fascia level or in a discrete position on the building above
- not obscuring details of the shop front or other parts of the building

### Preventing light pollution

- External illumination where necessary should be low key and discreetly positioned. It should be designed and sited so as not to cause disturbance to others, including residents and passing traffic;
- Internally illuminated fascia signs should be avoided altogether;
- Proposed lighting levels should be in keeping with the character of the area.

### Fixtures, services and entrances integration

- Any canopies installed should be integrated into the Shop front, be retractable and allow sufficient clearance below for pedestrian movement;
- Suitable security measures, such as toughened glass, better internal lighting, internal video cameras and alarm systems are preferable to shutters and grilles;
- Where security shutters are necessary, they should be internally fitted, dark coloured and be of an open design. Guide rails and shutter boxes should be concealed and sensitively integrated into the shop front design;
- Other fixtures, security features, services and secondary entrances should be integrated with and complement the building and shop front;
- Services should generally be located to the rear of a building to remain out of view from the main street or screened from view as appropriate.

### Materiality

- High quality and robust materials should be used in shop front construction. They should be in keeping with the character and appearance of the building;
- Where traditional shop fronts are restored, original materials could be replicated.

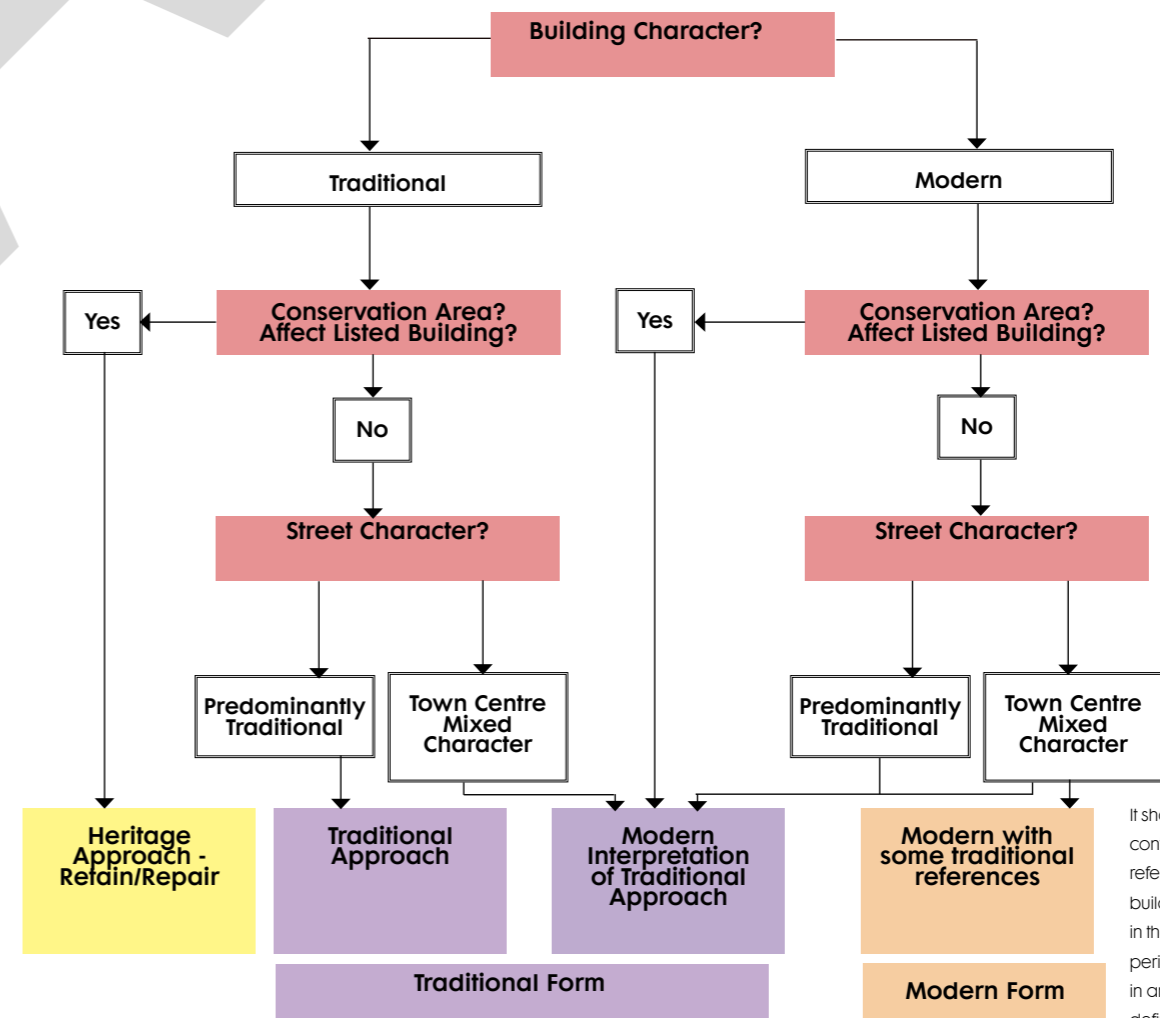
### Equality Act: access for all

- The shop front must allow equal access to all, regardless of abilities;
- Forecourts should be clearly delineated from the main pedestrian routes, allowing sufficient clear space for pedestrian movement.
- Historic shop front alterations should balance the requirement to preserve historic character with the needs of adequate access.

### Other considerations

- Material considerations such as conservation design guides should be considered as and where appropriate;
- The repair of traditional shop fronts should be considered as a first option, as opposed to replacement;
- The design of shop fronts in modern buildings can allow for innovation and more flexibility in the design. Nevertheless incorporating basic principles of traditional shop front design should produce successful results that can be an effective advertisement for the quality of the establishment.

## Design Approach Assessment Chart



It should be noted that in the context of the above 'Modern' refers to the character of any buildings or developments built in the Post-War (1945 onwards) period rather than buildings built in any specific architectural style defined as part of the 'Modern' or 'Modernist' movement.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHARD

### Applying design principles to Holyrood Street

- The shop front should reflect and relate in scale, proportion and architectural style to the building in which it is set and to the wider parade of shops;
- The fascia proportions should respect the rest of the shop front and the building in which it is set. It should not be too deep, wide or project forward from the face of the building. It should be positioned consistently with adjoining buildings;
- Where an existing shop front is to be retained and restored or an original shop front to be reinstated, surviving historic features should be preserved and restored in a sensitive manner;
- Any canopies installed should be integrated into the shop front, be retractable and allow sufficient clearance below for pedestrian movement;
- Suitable security measures, such as toughened glass, better internal lighting, internal video cameras and alarm systems are preferable to shutters and grilles;
- Where security shutters are necessary, they should be internally fitted, dark coloured and be of an open design. Guide rails and shutter boxes should be concealed and sensitively integrated into the shop front design;

### Existing Scenario

- Signage on building elevations above shop front
- Further fascia boards planted over line of original box blinds below the original fascia, with security measures obscuring the window head fascia
- Extended Dutch blinds obscuring original fascia and window detail
- Altered elevations - doorways blocked
- Loss of original features.
- Contrasting colours in decoration

### Opportunities

- Removal of overboards, re-instatement of original details, referencing historic photographs
- Establishment of horizontal line of fascias respecting the original intent of the building above the shop front
- Fascias used for signage, letters mounted or signwritten.
- Reinstatement of canopies in the form of roller blinds
- Establish original openings within shops.
- System of decoration for each individual shop with a single colour scheme providing identity for independent stores
- Vertical sign boards set at a regular height for each frontage



Existing Scenario



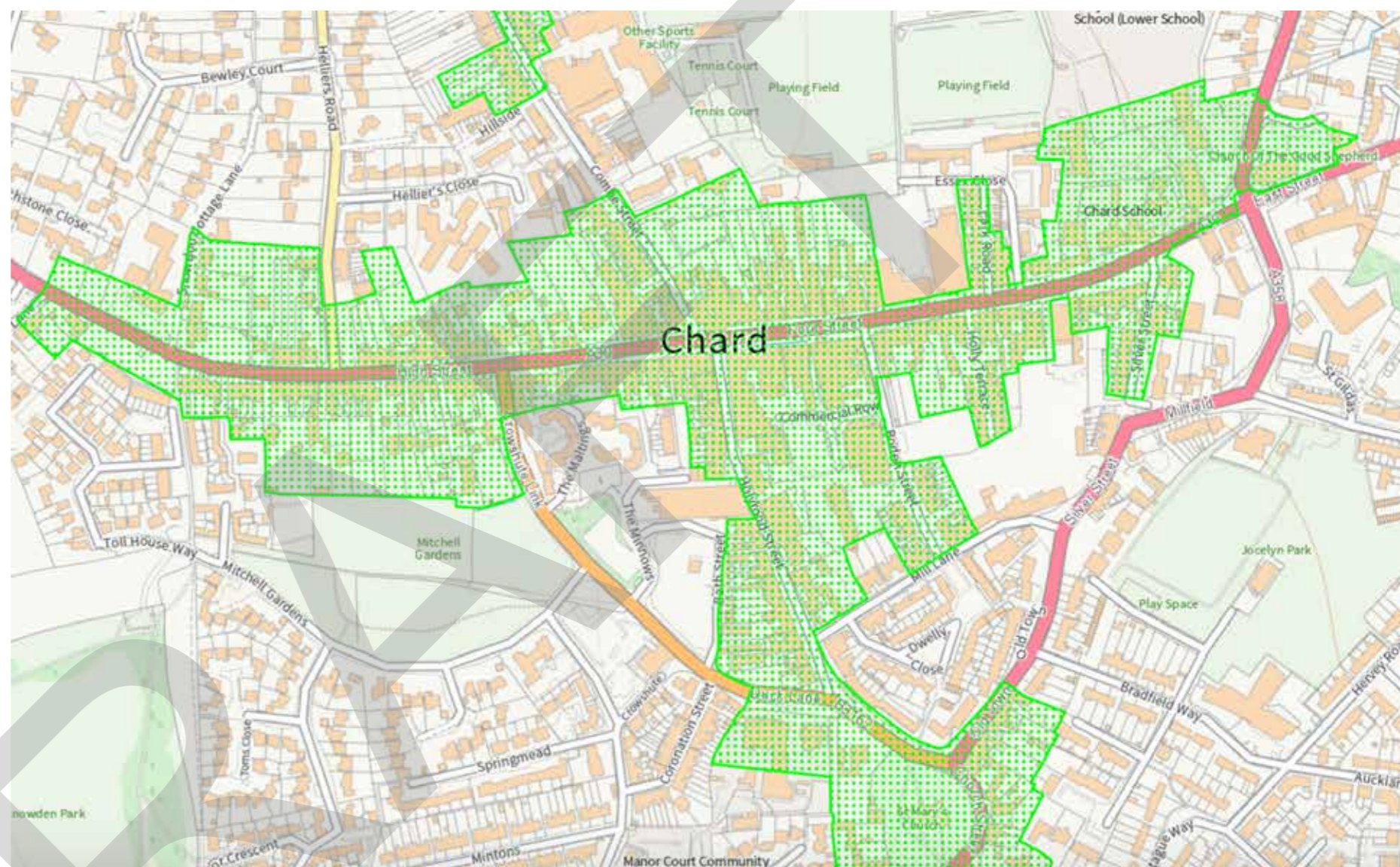
Opportunities



DRAFT

### Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

- A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character should be preserved or enhanced. There are over 90 conservation areas in the South Somerset District Area and many contain shops or shopping areas.
- A listed building is a building which is included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. Specific consent known as listed building consent is required for any work of alteration or demolition. It is a criminal offence to carry out such works without consent. There are over 5,000 entries in the South Somerset list including many shops and commercial premises.
- The South Somerset District Council internet site can help you establish whether your shop is either listed or is situated in a conservation area - referencing maps such as that illustrated for Chard. Note that the majority of Chard town centre is a conservation area.
- Where a building is listed or located in a conservation area the highest standards of design and construction will be expected and special requirements may apply. The retention and repair of good quality shop fronts even if not original will usually be expected. In some circumstances there may be a case for the replacement of poor quality or badly designed shop fronts with appropriate new installations, provided it can be shown that the result will be an enhancement of the building and its setting.



## IS PLANNING PERMISSION NECESSARY?

- The installation of a new shop front or the alteration of an existing shop front is development which requires planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Acts.
- In addition other permissions may be required:
- Advertisements and signs are controlled by the Control of Advertisements Regulations. Obtain pre application advice from the Planning Authority before proceeding.
- Listed building consent will usually be needed if the building is listed.
- Planning Permission will be needed if the proposal involves demolition or the complete removal of a shop front from an unlisted building within a conservation area
- It is always advisable to obtain pre application advice regarding the consents necessary from South Somerset District Council at an early stage.
- Note that the addition of external security measures (e.g. grilles, alarm units) will require planning permission.

## APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE NEEDED?

Planning applications for new shop fronts should include:

- Fully detailed plans and full elevation drawings of the whole building frontage, showing the new shop front to a scale of no smaller than 1:50.
- Full details of all materials proposed.
- In conservation areas or when the building is listed, this information should be supplemented by:
  - Elevation drawings showing the complete neighbouring buildings in relation to the proposal no smaller than 1:50 scale.
  - A detailed elevation of the proposed shop front to a scale no smaller than 1:25.
- Full coverage of details including sections through cornices, fascia, blind boxes, window frames and glazing bars, stall riser, doors and pilasters and security grille enclosures at a scale of 1:5 or 1:10.
- Full details of all materials and colours proposed.

Further design advice can be obtained by completing a request for pre application advice.

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/planning/apply-for-planning-permission/>

<https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/services/planning/pre-application-advice/>

This guide has been prepared by South Somerset District Council.

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Holyrood Street 1900's



Holyrood Street - modern day



Fore Street Jubilee

## POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

### **The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)**

This legislation sets out that planning permission is required for development likely to significantly change the external appearance of a building - this includes circumstances where:

- the development is within the curtilage of a listed building;
- any alteration would be within a Conservation Area;
- the development would consist of or include the construction or provision of a verandah, balcony or raised platform;
- any part of the development would extend beyond an existing shop front;
- the development would involve the insertion or creation of a new shop front or the alteration or replacement of an existing shop front; or
- the development would involve the installation or replacement of a security grill or shutter on a shop front

The list is not exhaustive and as a general guidance the Council should be contacted for advice prior to commencing any work.

### **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:**

Listed building consent is required for any works to demolish any part of a listed building or to alter or extend it in a way that affects its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, irrespective of whether planning permission is also required.

For all grades of listed building, unless the list entry indicates otherwise, the listing status covers the entire building, internal and external, and may cover objects fixed to it, and also curtilage buildings or other structures. This includes re-painting a shop front in a different colour, installing blinds or shutters, altering the shop interior, or installing a security alarm or extractor fan.

There is no fee for submitting an application for listed building consent.

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest and controls are in place to protect buildings within those areas. Planning permission is required for demolition of a building/shop front in a conservation area. Any development should have regard to Section 72(1) which states that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area."

### **Advertisement consent**

The display of advertisements with the associated structure is controlled through Advertisement Consent and separate planning permission is not required in addition to the consent. There are three different categories of advertisement consent which are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements)(England) Regulation 2007.

Detailed guidance is available in the Government publication 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide of Advertisers'

In general, some illuminated signs, fascia signs and projecting signs on shop fronts or business premises where the top edge of the sign is more than 4.6m above ground level, and most advertisements on gable ends, would require advertisement consent. As regulations on advertisement can be difficult to interpret, with certain criteria and conditions to be met, the Council should be contacted for advice prior to commencing any work.

### **National Policy:**

#### **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021:**

The NPPF places an emphasis on the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. This is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, creating better places in which to live and work and helping make development acceptable to communities (paragraph 126). Design guides and codes are expected to provide maximum clarity about design expectations, which reflect local character and design preferences. This helps to provide a framework to create distinctive places with a consistent high quality standard of design that allows a suitable degree of variety (paragraph 128). Such design guides should be produced as part of a plan or as supplementary planning documents, and should be based on effective community engagement and reflect local aspirations for the development of their area, taking into account the guidance contained in the National Design Guide and the National Model Design Code (paragraph 129).

The NPPF also supports development in town centres which reflects their distinctive characters (paragraph 86). In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities (paragraph 197).

In paragraphs 199 and 200, the NPPF clearly states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (e.g. a listed building or conservation area) should require clear and convincing justification.

National planning practice guidance provides advice on the key points to take into account on design, in terms of planning for well-designed places, making decisions about design, tools for assessment and improving design quality and effective community engagement on design.

### **National Design Guide 2020 (NDG) and National Model Design Code 2021 (NMDC)**

Together these documents illustrate how well-designed places, that are beautiful, healthy, greener, enduring and successful, can be achieved in practice.

Amongst the components of design, the NDG states that appearance of a building is the visual expression the building makes, including its external built form, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture. Additionally, the materials used for a building affects how well it functions and lasts over time. It is recommended that materials should be practical, durable, affordable and attractive to ensure they fit harmoniously with their surroundings. The detailing is equally important and the individual components and how they are put together contribute to the appearance of a building and how it is experienced.

An understanding of context is one of the ten design characteristics. This means an understanding of the context, history and the cultural characteristics of an area. The NDG states that creating a positive sense of place helps to

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/outdoor-advertisements-and-signs-a-guide-for-advertisers>
- 2 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/design>

contribute to well-being, inclusion and community cohesion. Well-designed development is demonstrably based on the architecture prevalent in the area including the local vernacular and other factors that relate to identity. The identity of a place comes from the way that buildings, streets and spaces, landscape and infrastructure combine together and how people experience them. Well-designed, sustainable places with a strong identity give their users, occupiers and owners a sense of pride, helping to create and sustain communities and neighbourhoods.

Lifespan is also an important component of design cited in the NDG, as well-designed places sustain their beauty over the longer term and add to the quality of life of their users, while also feeling welcoming to visitors and passers-by.

### South Somerset Local Plan 2006-2028

South Somerset's Local Plan was adopted in March 2015 and is available on our website: <https://www.southsomerset.gov.uk/your-council/your-council-plan-and-strategies/planning-policy/local-plan/>

This supplementary planning document provides additional detail to, and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

### POLICY EQ2: GENERAL DEVELOPMENT

Development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district.

Development proposals, extensions and alterations to existing buildings, structures and places will be considered against:

- Sustainable construction principles;
- Creation of quality places;
- Conserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area;
- Reinforcing local distinctiveness and respect local context;
- Creating safe environments addressing crime prevention and community safety;

- Having regard to South Somerset District Council's published Development Management advice and guidance; and
- Making efficient use of land whilst having regard to:
- Housing demand and need; i Infrastructure and service availability;
- Accessibility;
- Local area character;
- Site specific considerations

Innovative designs delivering low energy usage and/or wastage will be encouraged. Development must not risk the integrity of internationally, nationally or locally designated wildlife and landscape sites. Development proposals should protect the residential amenity of neighbouring properties and new dwellings should provide acceptable residential amenity space in accordance with Policy HW1.

### POLICY EQ3: HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Heritage assets will be conserved and where appropriate enhanced for their historic significance and important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place. Their potential to contribute towards the economy, tourism, education and local identity will be exploited.

All new development proposals relating to the historic environment will be expected to:

- Safeguard or where appropriate enhance the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of heritage assets;
- Make a positive contribution to its character through high standards of design which reflect and complement it and through the use of appropriate materials and techniques;
- Ensure alterations, including those for energy efficiency and renewable energy, are balanced alongside the need to retain the integrity of the historic environment and to respect the character and performance of buildings, adopting principles of minimum intervention and reversibility.

As set out in the policies above, the Council will have regard to a range of issues when considering planning applications involving new or replacement shop fronts, including:

- that design should be of a high quality creating quality places
- local distinctiveness should be reinforced and local context respected
- the creation of safe environments
- the historic environment should be safeguarded or where appropriate enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings
- a positive contribution to the character of heritage assets through high standards of design

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