A Local Plan for

Lancaster District

2020 – 2031

Plan period 2011 - 2031

Shopfronts and Advertisements Supplementary Planning Document [Published May 2025]

Shaping
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CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

1. Introduction

Background

This document has been prepared by Lancaster City Council to supplement policy set out in Policy DM21 (Advertisements and Shopfronts) of the Development Management DPD to provide further guidance in relation to advertisements and shopfronts.

This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will assist anyone proposing to install, alter or replace a shopfront or advertisement anywhere within Lancaster district. This SPD applies not only to retail uses but also the following use types:

- Restaurants and Food & Drinks; and
- Financial and Professional Services

Developers are advised to discuss proposals for new shopfronts and advertisements in historic contexts with the City Council's Heritage and Design Team at an early stage. This will include premises within Conservation Areas or that are either designated or non-designated heritage assets.

Using this Guide

This document is intended to help guide you through the process of designing new or altered shopfronts and advertisements. It may be helpful to begin with the questions posed in section 4.1 when forming a broad idea of your proposal, before referring to sections 4.2 and 5.1 when finalising details. If the building or existing shopfront dates to the interwar period of 1918-1939, Appendix A provides a more specific approach.

2. Planning Context

Almost all proposals for new shopfronts, alterations to existing shopfronts and replacement shopfronts require **Planning Permission**. Alterations to Listed Buildings will additionally require **Listed Building Consent**.

Nearly all illuminated signs and many other signs will require **Advertisement Consent**. If you are proposing to erect an advertisement sign, you should check with Lancaster City Council's Development Management Team whether you need to apply to the Council for Advertisement Consent.

Some forms of advertisement are permitted for display without the Planning Authority's specific approval known as **'Deemed Consent'**. Guidance on those forms of advertisement that benefit from Deemed Consent is available in the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government publication 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs: A Guide for Advertisers' (June 2007).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (2024) [NPPF] is the overarching policy framework to which local authorities refer when determining planning applications. The NPPF places a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development.' According to the NPPF, *'[g]ood design is a key aspect of sustainable development, [it] creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.'*

Part 12 of the framework, 'Achieving well-designed places,' puts good design at the centre of decision-making when determining planning applications: *'The creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve.'* It states that *'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.'* Design guides are therefore one way to help applicants understand how to fulfil these policy expectations at an early stage of the planning process.

The Local Plan

The Council's Local Plan (adopted 2025) contains policies which are of relevance to the design of shopfronts and advertising which should be read alongside this document. These include, but are not limited to:

- DM16 Town Centre Development
- DM17 Retail Frontages
- DM18 Local Centres
- DM21 Advertisements and Shopfronts
- DM29 Key Design Principles
- DM37 Development Affecting Listed Buildings
- DM38 Development Affecting Conservation Areas
- DM39 The Setting of Designated Heritage Assets
- DM41 Development Affecting Non-Designated Heritage or their Settings

For development in Carnforth, Policy CNDP E4 (Shopfront design) in the Carnforth Neighbourhood Development Plan and the accompanying Design Code should also be referred to.

3. The History of Shopfronts

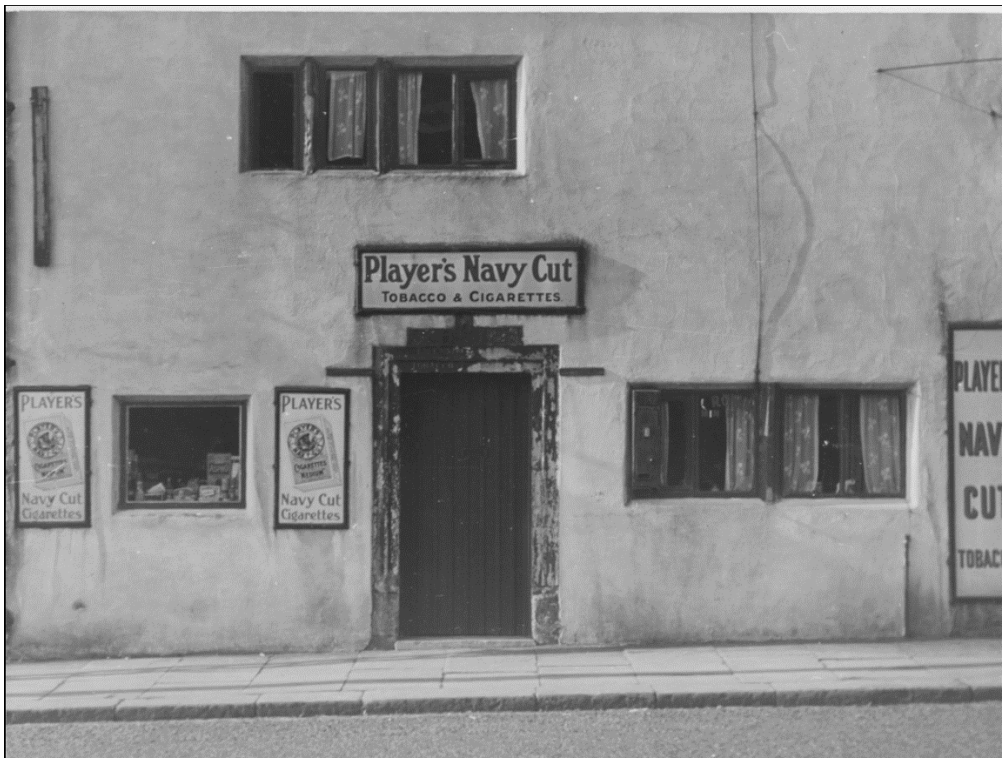
In Britain, the origin of shops as we know them today can be traced to the medieval period, when the practice of buying and selling goods began to take on the more organised form of fairs and markets. The earliest shops were either simple market stalls, which could be opened on market day, or rooms on the ground floor of buildings surrounding the marketplace which could serve customers via open windows facing the street. Very few examples of these early shops have survived the development pressure on such prime commercial locations.

By the mid-17th century, the commonplace shop was established across the country, typically with its frontage occupying the full front elevation of a plot at ground floor level and a separate entrance to living accommodation which was situated above or at the rear of the shop. The frontages featured large open windows and timber 'stallboards' which could be lowered when the shop was open to form a counter. It was not until the 18th century that glazing was commonly introduced to the shopfront, as until this time it was prohibitively expensive.

The new accessibility of glass to shop owners in the 18th century, combined with rapid industrial and urban expansion, saw a transition in the treatment of shopfronts, starting in London and spreading across the country to towns and cities such as Lancaster by the 19th century. Glazed shopfronts not only allowed more daylight for indoor shopping, but also provided an opportunity for retailers to advertise their products to passers-by. In hours of darkness retailers began to use artificial lighting to illuminate these displays, giving way to the consumerist spectacle of the high street which would be recognisable to a modern viewer.

The timber double-fronted shop with central customer entrance and fascia signage above prevailed until the early- to mid-20th century, when department stores such as Burton's, featuring large multi-storey areas of glazing, became a common feature of town centres. While some smaller premises continued to install traditional shop frontages, in this period architectural and design movements such as Art Nouveau and Art Deco began to have widespread influence over shopfront design (see Appendix A for further information). From the mid-20th century onwards, retail premises have varied widely in scale, form, style and material palette, resulting in the eclectic street scenes which now characterise towns and cities across the country.

Shops on Market Street, Carnforth (Early 1900s)



Shopfronts come in all shapes and sizes, and often have to adapt to the host building. A 17th century house in use as a shop in Golgotha Village, Lancaster (1930s)

Georgian shopfront on St Leonard's Gate, Lancaster (c.1920)

4. The Design of Shopfronts

4.1 Principles for shopfront design

Principle 1: Understanding the context of the street

Alterations to shopfronts should be considered in relation to the context of the street.

Think about the following:

- How old is the street? What do you think its original occupants were like?
- What are the proportions of the street? Is it narrow or wide? Densely or sparsely built? How wide or tall are the buildings?
- What is the rhythm of the street and how would a new shopfront or alterations to an existing shopfront impact it?
- Does the shop occupy more than one building? If so, how can the appearance of two buildings be retained or restored?
- Is the street uniform in its character or are the buildings more eclectic, having developed over different periods and with different architectural styles?
- Is there an opportunity for shop owners to work cooperatively to rationalise the design of the street and create an overall visual harmony?

The buildings on the south side of Market Street in Carnforth are uniform and sweep upwards forming a distinctive streetscape. The buildings date to the late 19th century and are of three storeys and two bays with sash windows to the upper floors and shopfronts below. A regular rhythm is formed by the evenly spaced shop pilasters as they rise up the hill.

Principle 2: Understanding the context of the building

When designing new shopfronts or altering an existing shopfront, consideration should be given to the context of the whole building frontage.

Think about the following:

- What are the proportions of the building? What scale of alteration can it comfortably accommodate?
- What is the relationship between the ground floor shopfront and the floors above? If there is a disconnection or the upper floors appear to be unsupported, are their opportunities to introduce visual ties such as pilasters or columns? Where do the windows of the upper floors sit in comparison to those of the shopfront?
- What is the age of the building? If there is an existing shopfront, what is the age and style of the shopfront?
- What do you think the original status of the building was? How does this compare to its neighbours?
- Which materials and colours sit comfortably?

Shopfronts on this building in Carnforth correspond to the layout of windows on the upper floors. Divisions are provided by cornices and pilasters.

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Principle 3: Enhancing architectural and historic interest

The commercial centres of towns usually form the historic core of the settlement. These areas are often part of a designated Conservation Area where there is a requirement under planning legislation to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of these areas of special architectural and historic interest.

Think about the following:

- Is there an existing shopfront? What is its age and state of repair? Does it respond the principles 1 and 2 of this document?
- Are there any historic features? How can removing or covering them be avoided? Are there any features which have previously been covered and could be reinstated? Are there any historic photographs which reveal further information?
- Are there any more recent features which do not fit with principles 1 and 2 of this document? Could they be removed or changed in some way?
- What materials and colours sit comfortably? How can the choice of materials reflect the design, status and period of the building?

This timber shopfront on Penny Street in Lancaster likely dates to the late 19th or early 20th century. Its slender mullions and transoms, panelled stallriser and tiled lobby have survived. There is a large modern fascia which might have been laid over the original slim timber fascia and cornice.

Principle 4: Designing sustainably

By working with quality materials, careful detailing and a high standard of craftsmanship, a more robust design will be achieved resulting in shop fronts with a longer life span that require less maintenance and/or replacement. When specifying and sourcing materials consideration should be given to their durability, and to certification to ensure they are from renewable sources.

Think about the following:

- Where will the shopfront be located? Is this an exposed or coastal location? Is it sheltered? How does the design need to take this into account?
- How can you ensure that the shopfront remains in good condition?
- What is the longevity of the chosen materials? What is their embodied carbon? Are they sustainably sourced?
- How will materials and finishes weather or patinate?

Principle 5: Improving accessibility

Equal access for people with impaired mobility, learning difficulties, visual and hearing impairments and customers with pushchairs and small children should form a basic principle for the design of any shopfronts. It is a requirement under the Equality Act 2010 and the Building Regulations *Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings (2021)* to provide reasonable provisions to ensure that buildings are accessible and usable.

Think about the following:

- How accessible will the shop be from the street? Is the signage clear, concise and easy to read? Will there be street clutter or pavement signs around the door which may impede accessibility? Is there a level threshold from the street allowing easy entrance for wheelchairs and pushchairs? If not, is a ramp a possibility?
- Are the entrance doors wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through?
- If the building is historic, what are the limitations to providing accessibility? Can alternative forms of access be arranged which would allow the building's special interest to be maintained?
- Do you need to carry out an access audit?

Principle 6: Improving shopfront security through good design

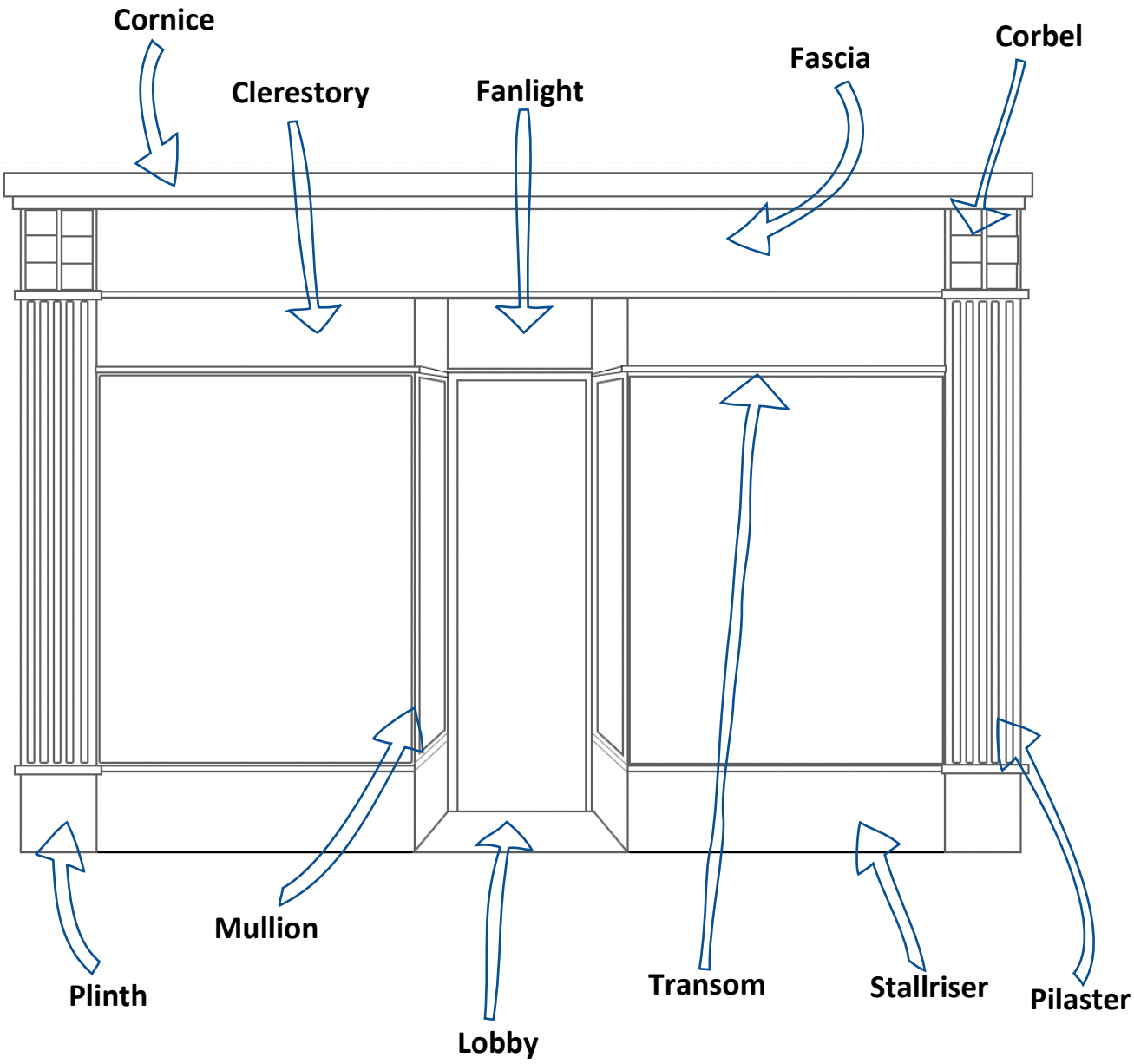
Security should be viewed as a fundamental part of the design process and not as a last minute add on. Good design can improve shop front security in a variety of ways.

Think about the following:

- What are the security requirements of the premises? If there is an existing shopfront, what are its limitations and how can security be improved? If you are designing a new shopfront, how can security measures be incorporated?
- How much glass is there? Are they historic windows? Is security or toughened glass an option?
- Is a shutter or grille necessary? Where will this be housed? How can vandalism be discouraged? Is a removable option or see-through grille a possibility?

The timber detailing on this Art Nouveau shopfront in Lancaster is left unaffected by security shutters or grilles.

4.2 Typical features of a shopfront



Fascias

The **fascia** normally contains the signage and runs horizontally above the shop window to define it from the building above.

Modern fascias are often too deep and over-emphasise this horizontal element, which can break up the rhythm of the street. Many retail chains have standardised box and board fascia signs that are pre-designed and don't relate to the design of the individual building or shop front. These should be avoided and be re-designed to better reflect their immediate context (Principle 1 & 2).

Design guidelines:

- **Fascias should be kept as simple as possible and should form an integral part of the overall design. They should not be superimposed onto existing fascias.**
- **The depth of the fascia should be in proportion with the building and the shopfront. They should sit well below the window cills of the first floor and not encroach or overlap with the upper floors. Fascias should not be used to cover false ceilings.**
- **The width of the fascia should be in proportion to the building and the shopfront. One single fascia should not extend beyond the shopfront or extend over party walls. Where there is a double-width shopfront or a retail unit extends into two buildings, the fascia should be defined and broken up vertically by pilasters and, where appropriate, corbels.**
- **The materials of the fascia should relate to the style and detailing of the existing building.**

Cornices, Corbels and Pilasters

A **cornice** is the continuous horizontal projection over the fascia, which helps shed water from the building and in some instances houses a blind box. Traditionally constructed shopfronts will have lead flashing above the cornice and sometimes architectural detailing such as dentilation.

Corbels (also known as consoles) and **pilasters** are used to define the extent of the shopfront and differentiate between adjoining shops and buildings. Where there is a double-width shopfront, corbels and pilasters should be used to break up the horizontal emphasis of the shopfronts which would otherwise create a visual disconnection between the ground floor and upper floors. The **plinth** is the base of the pilaster and will usually be of a plain design.

Pilasters, corbels and plinths in traditional shopfronts often have decorative timberwork such as fluting or moulding and this should be retained or reinstated in existing traditional shopfronts.

Design guidelines:

- **Cornices can be incorporated into any shopfront design (whether modern or traditional) and should be detailed so as to allow water to shed away from the building.**
- **Pilasters, corbels and plinths should always be included in traditional designs for shopfronts and should be of adequate size to provide visual support for the upper floors**
- **Pilasters provide visual support and rhythm to the street and may be incorporated into traditional shopfront designs. Where this is not appropriate, alternatives such as masonry piers or modern vertical columns may be used.**
- **The placement of pilasters should relate to the arrangement of windows in the upper floors, so as to create a vertical visual connection between the upper and ground floors.**
- **Plinths should be of robust materials such as masonry in order to withstand deterioration due to impact, road salt and water ingress.**

Cornices and pilasters are an opportunity to introduce detail and to frame the shopfront, as in this example.

Stallrisers

The **stallriser** is the solid base to the shop window and provides balance to the proportions of the shopfront and also can protect the shopfront from damage or rainwater from the street level. There are a range of materials used for stallrisers, often depending on the style and period of the building and shopfront. For example, stone, timber panels, tile or marble have been used.

Traditional shops with suspended timber flooring may also have decorative metal ventilation grilles within the stallrisers and these should be retained to ensure that appropriate ventilation to the building is maintained.

Design guidelines:

- **Stallrisers should be used for the design of both traditional and modern shopfronts as they provide a visual connection to the ground floor**
- **Stallrisers in traditional shopfronts should at least be the same height of the fascia and can be taller. The height of the stallriser often relates to the nature of the goods historically on sale: historic research may inform design decisions.**
- **Stallrisers should be constructed in a suitable material to the style of the building and the street e.g. timber panels, stone, brick, terracotta, tile or marble**
- **Existing metal ventilation grilles should be retained wherever possible and cleared so they can function in providing ventilation to the building**

Windows

The window is an integral part of the shopfront, used to display goods and services. Traditional shop windows are comprised of windowpanes subdivided by **mullions** (vertical bars) and **transoms** (horizontal bars) which provide structural support for the glass. As well as structural support, the mullions provide visual support with the upper floors and when aligned with the windows above they can create symmetry with the rest of the building. Comprehensive design is required to the glazing element of the shopfront with consideration given to the use of the building.

Traditional shops will usually have a **fanlight** above the entrance door, typically rectangular or square glazing set into a timber frame. The glass may be plain or decorative with stained or etched glass, usually as part of a wider scheme for the shopfront. Some fanlights are bottom-hinged to open inwards, allowing ventilation into the shop.

Design guidelines:

- **The materials used for the shop window framing should relate to the design and style of the building**
- **Mullions should be used to vertically subdivide the glazing and should relate to the design of the rest of the building. Where increased security is necessary, mullions and transoms can be strengthened with reinforcing steel.**
- **Where there is a suspended ceiling internally, transoms and opaque glazing on the shopfront should be used to hide the ceiling**
- **Where there is a fanlight it should not be blocked up or painted over**
- **Where ventilation is required, opening fanlights and transom windows should be designed to tilt-in**

Doors and lobbies

The entrance to the shop is the key focal point and with regard to **Principle 5 (Improving Accessibility)**, it is the part of the shopfront that is most susceptible to change. Reasonable access needs to be provided either through level or ramped access from the street in compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations. However, consideration still needs to be given to the design in relation to the style of the building.

The placement of the door and threshold should relate to the rhythm and style of the building; it may relate to the arrangement of windows above to create symmetry. With many traditional shopfronts, the door is centrally placed and is usually recessed with a tiled or mosaic **lobby** entrance. Often a separate entrance is required to access the upper floors and this is usually set to one side of the shopfront.

Many lobbies in the district feature decorative mosaics which provide visual interest and occasionally advertise a historic business. These should be retained wherever possible.

Design guidelines:

- **Doors and thresholds should provide level or ramped access from the street level and comply with Part M of the Building Regulations with regard to opening widths.**
- **Materials should be non-slip and provide clear visibility**
- **Consideration should be given to the retention of historic detailing, such as decorative mosaics**
- **Lobbies should be retained where they exist and reinstated where they have been made flush in order to maintain the rhythm of projections and recesses along the street.**

Blinds, Canopies and Awnings

A blind or **awning** offers protection from the sun or rain for both shopfront and shoppers. They were in widespread use from the mid-19th century until the 1950s, and were usually integrated into the shopfront architecture so that they were neatly accommodated when not in use.

Design guidelines:

- **Awnings should be designed to be retractable so that they are only pulled out when needed and housed in blind-boxes when not needed.**
- **If an awning or canopy is planned, this should be designed from an early stage so that a blind box does not need to be retrofitted, which can sometimes appear clumsy, particularly if located above the cornice.**
- **Where there is an existing blind box consideration should be given to restoring the mechanism. New blind cloths should be of non-reflective and durable fabric.**
- **Where an awning cannot be comfortably accommodated, multiple window blinds may be a reasonable option.**
- **Dutch canopies will be discouraged.**

5. The Design of Advertisements

Advertisements allow businesses to display their name and goods or services offered and seek to provide a positive impression to potential customers. Well-designed signage is key to putting across a message of quality and trustworthiness. It is important that the nature and placement of all signs and advertisements is carefully considered in relation to the context of the shopfront building and street.

A business on New Street in Lancaster boasts an unusual symbol sign denoting a toy shop.

It is listed at Grade II.

5.1 Typical advertisement types

Fascia signs and lettering

Fascia signage is the principal advertising opportunity for a business, and care should be taken over its design, colour scheme and typography.

Design guidelines:

- **Fascia signage should convey the name and nature of the business without detracting from the appearance of the shop front or the building. Simply stating the name of the business is usually all that is needed to provide a clear and effective sign.**
- **Fascia signage on historic buildings should be either sign written or consist of individually applied letters on risers. Box signs and applied fascia boards should be avoided.**
- **Lettering should be in proportion with the sign and be easily contained within the fascia, while allowing for a reasonable margin of empty space above and below.**

Projecting and hanging signs

Well designed hanging signs can add visual interest and help convey the nature and quality of the business.

Design guidelines:

- **There should be no more than one projecting or hanging sign per shop front.**
- **Signs should normally be located to one side of the shop front and no higher than the first floor cill. Signs positioned in the centre may potentially be located higher.**
- **Signs should not be affixed to any existing historic or architectural feature.**
- **Hanging signs should be in a style and colour which coordinates with that of the shop front.**
- **Proposals for well designed symbol signs indicating the trade or nature of the business will be acceptable.**
- **All signs should adhere to the minimum clearance requirements of 2.5m between the base of the sign and the pavement, and 600mm between any part of the sign and the kerb edge.**

Illumination

Illuminated signs will often require consent from the Council, and can make a positive contribution to the appearance of the streetscape at night, as well as improving safety for pedestrians, where well designed.

Design guidelines:

- **Lighting should not be excessive or contribute to visual clutter, excess energy consumption or light spillage. Where possible, illumination should**

be incorporated into the design of the shop front. Light fittings must be designed to be unobtrusive and illuminate fascia and lettering only.

- **Internally illuminated box signs will not be permitted in the Conservation Area or on listed buildings.**

Window advertisements and wall signs

Other types of advertisement such as window and wall banners may be appropriate in some circumstances, such as when advertising an event on a temporary basis.

Design guidelines:

- **Banner and poster signs should be generally avoided. Where they are necessary on a temporary basis they may be located as part of a shop display and should be set as far back from the window as practicable.**
- **Upper floor windows should not be used to increase the advertising space for the business occupying the ground floor.**
- **Completely obscuring windows through the application of vinyl film or similar is discouraged.**

Appendix A. Interwar Shopfronts

What is Moderne, or 'Art Deco'?

In the years following the end of the First World War, Western visual arts saw radical change. Architectural Modernism emerged in Western Europe and Russia as architects increasingly pursued truth to their modern materials and functions. While the intellectualism of Modernism in its various guises dominated in entries to international competitions and the pages of architectural periodicals, the 'style moderne' (or 'Art Deco,' after the Exposition Internationale of 1925) was its cousin in visual design, which spoke to the hedonism, glamour and youth culture of the 'roaring twenties.' While in Britain Art Deco did not gain widespread traction as it did in mainland Europe and the United States, this moment in visual culture was nonetheless manifested in specific contexts, namely commercial and leisure. This meant that the style was ubiquitous in the popular seaside resorts such as Morecambe, and commonplace on the high streets of fashionable towns and cities.

Art Deco was an architecture of opulence and abundance which reflected the conspicuous consumption of the interwar years. Art Deco designs were dominated by sleek, glossy and streamlined profiles, complemented by reflective materials. Following Howard Carter's discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922, Egyptomania gripped the imagination of the public, and highly stylised 'Egyptian' motifs, such as geometric patternwork and pyramidal parapets, made their way into Art Deco products and buildings. Signature characteristics of Art Deco include geometric shapes and angular corners broken up by ornamental motifs. Entrances are often extravagant, roofs tend to be flat and windows can made up of continuous bands of glass. Common motifs also included the 'sunburst' pattern, zig-zags, and asymmetric glazing.

Shopfront for a new branch of the Lancaster and District Co-operative Society (1930s)

Art Deco Shopfronts

In the 1920s, retailing practices changed as the rise of consumerism saw ordinary people spending money on a wider variety of non-essential goods. The customer's ability to make a selection from a wide array of products, and to follow the latest fashions, became paramount concerns.

Following the Exposition Internationale of 1925, the new style moderne was adopted in the small shops of Paris. These had shiny glass-covered interiors with opulent colour schemes featuring green, black and gold. Their windows were treated as exhibitions of the brand (a novel approach). They were considered the height of fashion and began to be copied elsewhere. Accordingly, shop traders back in Britain began to value display space more than ever before. Shop windows became ever larger, encouraging window shopping and allowing for creativity of shop window dressing. Newly available plate glass and steel joists – enabled large expanses of unbroken display window. Gas lighting was being replaced by electricity, which, without a naked flame, could be used within the actual window with much reduced condensation. The transom window, previously of stained or frosted glass, could now be used to hide the wires etc. beneath suspended ceilings.

Sunburst patterns and asymmetric glazing are typical of Art Deco shop frontages – particularly as they were an easy and inexpensive way for a shop owner to upgrade their building and appear modern. Vertical emphasis was common, and some older buildings had newly refurbished front elevations with tall vertical windows or 'fins' installed. Materials such as faience, terrazzo, granite and Vitrolite were used to create sleek, glossy, minimalist finishes.

New materials came into use which gave the glossy finish of marble without requiring expensive craftsmanship. Vitrolite was the most important of these, classified as an opaque silica wall lining, which could be bent, bevelled or drilled. Impervious and easily cleaned, it was much used for the internal walls of hospitals during the early 1920s, but by 1925 was beginning to be used for shop fascias. In that year, it was first made in jade green, which was a popular colour at the time through its associations with Aztec art objects in Brazilian onyx.

Block or box letters were directly applied to a smooth fascia. Many were of painted wood or stainless steel. Lettering was often arranged in a typographical manner, either in distinct blocks or as upright columns of letters.

Key Characteristics – What to look out for

- Clean, smooth and glossy facades without cornices, brackets or mouldings, and with frameless glazing
- Zig-zag arcade entrances - the splayed windows cut down reflection - and island show- cases with facetted sides
- Egyptian style decorations and geometric designs, such as the sun-ray motif or lightning bolts, on door panels, ventilation grilles and transom lights
- Use of chrome, granite, marble or Vitrolite
- Colour schemes which are variations on black, grey, white, gold, silver and green

Risks and Vulnerabilities

Throughout history, shopfronts have been subject to constant flux as retailers undertake successive rebranding measures in order to meet demands of current market trends. While Victorian shopfronts are often robust enough to withstand some degree of intervention while retaining their integrity, interwar shops tend to be extremely sensitive to inappropriate alterations. Their minimalist style means that the overall architectural composition is easily compromised, for example through alterations to signage, entrances and windows.

Some surviving shopfronts in Morecambe have been overlaid by large fascia boards and cladding. Examples include Bay Beds (35 Queen Street); The Warehouse (13 Queen Street); 21 Pedder Street; Bays Bikes (231-233 Marine Road Central), Brew Me Sunshine (Victoria Street); Clark St garage (Tyson's Antiques), and Black Thai (Ground Floor of the former Crescent Café on Marine Road Central).

This extract from the Lancaster Guardian of 1937 advertises new, modern shop premises on Penny Street .

Top: Chrome Lettering (1930), Bottom: Timber Lettering on opaque glass and chrome background (1930)

Principles for Alterations to Art Deco Shopfronts

Principle 1. Treat the shopfront as a whole

Composition and clean lines are key. This is all about a sleek, flawless appearance. Projecting signs and fascia boards, while seemingly small details, can affect this.

Principle 2. Attention to detail

Architects and shopfitters paid attention to even the tiniest details such as door furniture, light fittings and ventilation grilles. Consider how these elements of your shopfront complement the whole.

Principle 3. Get rid of your fascia boards!

Art Deco shopfronts were usually designed to be flush, meaning that overlaid fascia boards can be damaging to their significance. Consider how the fascia board fits into the shopfront as a whole - is it possible to dispense with it altogether?

Principle 4. Attention to materials

Glossy, glamourous appearing materials are key. They need not be expensive but should be well considered. Unfortunately, Vitrolite is no longer widely available. Consider if the effect can be achieved with alternative materials. The completeness of the shopfront might mean that the benefit of replacing the whole outweighs repair or replacement of single sections of damaged Vitrolite.

Principle 5. Experiment with lettering

Like everything else in an Art Deco design, the signage and lettering should be considered as part of the whole. The 1920s and 30s saw a great deal of experimentation with typography, and modern sans serif fonts with bold downstrokes and thin crossbars were popular. Consider your choice of lettering carefully – calligraphic and overly decorative fonts will not be appropriate. Cut-out, incised, or mounted individual letters will usually work better than standard fascia board signage. This can be achieved in a variety of materials.

Examples of typefaces suitable for Art Deco shopfronts and advertisements:

Gill Sans

Bahnschrift

British Rail

Gadugi

Haettenscweiler

Century Gothic