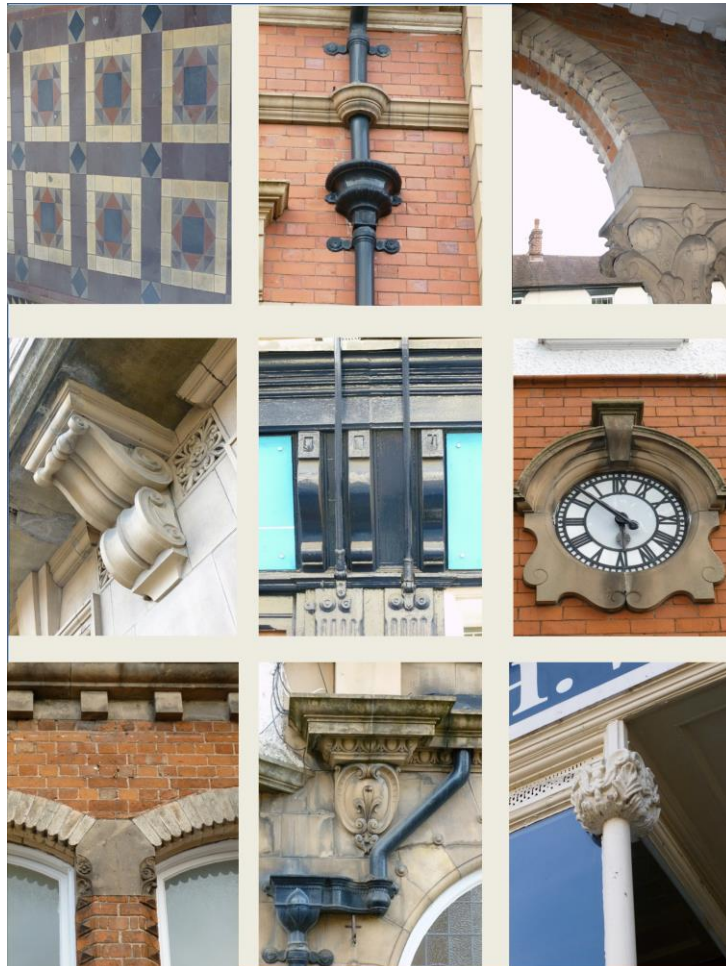


Church Stretton

Shop Front Design Guide



Shop Front Design Guide

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Shop Front Design Guide.

1 Introduction.

Church Stretton is a small market town in the heart of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Most of the historic town centre is a designated Conservation Area, having many listed buildings, principally on High Street, Sandford Avenue, Shrewsbury Road and in The Square.

The South side of Sandford Avenue contains a pleasing mix of Victorian and Edwardian buildings making up the main shopping area. A number of period shop fronts survive with the upper storeys being largely original.



View looking up Sandford Avenue from the railway bridge

As the eye travels up Sandford Avenue from the railway bridge, the overall impression is of a town with character, a selection of architectural styles, merging into a pleasing mix of mellow brick and terracotta detailing. The shop frontages in the main retain their traditional elements – decorative pilasters, ornate corbels, interesting ironwork, glazed tiles and a working clock on “Peppers”.



An example of a well-balanced shop front

2 Purpose of the Guide

The aim of this Design Guide is to provide guidance for the design of shop fronts in the interests of maintaining an aesthetically pleasing, consistent and secure shopping environment. It also aims to raise awareness of the overall effect that good shop front design can have on the street scene and consequently on the perceived image of the town.

It is not intended to be prescriptive or exhaustive, but to allow for a degree of imagination and choice. Although the Shop Front Guide refers in general to shops in the Conservation Area, it is equally important, that the principles of the Guide are adopted by those shop proprietors, who are within the town boundary but outside the Conservation Area.

Key design issues will be highlighted in boxes where relevant

3 Shop fronts

Shop fronts play a major role in our perception of a shopping street. They are an integral part of the façade of a building. They provide the function of letting light into the ground floor, providing an area for display and also affording a visual and physical support for the upper storeys of buildings. It is vital then, that shop fronts are contextual, reflecting the detail,

proportions and design of the whole building within the street scene. Designs should be imaginative, yet respectful of the constraint of the building and street, enhancing the building and area rather than conflicting with it.

Design of shop fronts has traditionally been based on an agreed set of principles which provide for a harmonious result as well as providing a distinct character to a business.

The varied design of shop fronts evokes a strong sense of tradition, adding a distinct identity that defines the historic character of the town.

Where appropriate the design of a shop positioned on a corner site should aim to take full advantage of its unique location by incorporating a double continuous frontage.



*Although on a corner site, this shop presents a unified appearance.
Note however that the light paintwork draws the eye away from the window display*

The quality and attention to the design detail of shop fronts in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a Conservation Area is of paramount importance. High quality design is an important part of the viability of a shopping area. An attractive shop front invites custom. Church Stretton is lucky in having a large number of surviving shop fronts from many periods of history, especially on Sandford Avenue, High Street, Shrewsbury Road and in The Square.



Example of a well-balanced shop front with a number of historic details

Where corporate design conflicts with the character of the street or town, companies should be prepared to adapt or moderate their own corporate style to better fit in with a Conservation Area.



Large corporate companies can adapt their style to a conservation area.

As far as possible the original features of the shop fronts should be retained, as each individual historic element of a shop front adds together to create the street scene.

When thinking about any alterations, decoration or upgrade of a shop front, it is important to consider the wider visual impact on the building as a whole as well as how it sits in the street scene.

New and refurbished shop fronts should follow the following principles. They should:

- Work towards enhancing the overall quality of the street scene
- Reinforce the character of the area and seek to create a sense of place
- Conserve all existing historic features – ironwork, plasterwork, glass and light fittings
- Maintain existing proportions
- Use paint colours and signs which are in keeping
- Use traditional materials at all times – metal, plastic and highly reflective materials should be avoided
- Adapt company house styles (where used) to tie in with the vernacular



Herbgarden shows unsuitable choice of paint colour, fascia too deep, lettering inappropriate, stickers on window, none of which adds to the street scene.

4 Planning Permission

Although some small changes to shop fronts do not require planning permission, most do. Repair work and routine maintenance which does not change the character of the shop does not require planning permission. Planning permission is required if the change to the shop front will “materially” alter the appearance of the building within the street scene.

Alterations to a listed building (removing existing architectural features, fitting security shutters, installing blinds, changing paint colour, fixing signs or advertisements) may also require “Listed Building Consent”. Special permission is required for signs and advertisements.

General Planning Permission

Planning permission will be required for any “material” changes to the external appearance of shop fronts, including new installations. This includes any alteration to the size of the shop window, installation of security shutters, hanging signs, canopies and blinds as well as any changes in the size of a fascia.

Any general repair work or maintenance that does not change the external appearance of the shop front does not need planning permission.

Listed Building Consent

As well as requiring planning permission, listed buildings require a higher level of protection. Listed Building Consent will be required for work that affects the alteration of the historic fabric of the building. Any alteration to a shop front or insertion of a new one that sits within a listed building will need Listed Building Consent. Such consent will also be needed for minor work, such as removal of any architectural features, the erection of any new signs, change of colour scheme, fitting of alarms or extractor fans, as well as major work on altering shop interiors.

Advertisement Consent

Advertising Consent is required for the majority of advertisements or signs. This consent is complex and before commencing any work or making any acquisitions a check should be made with Shropshire Council Planning Department.

Building Regulations

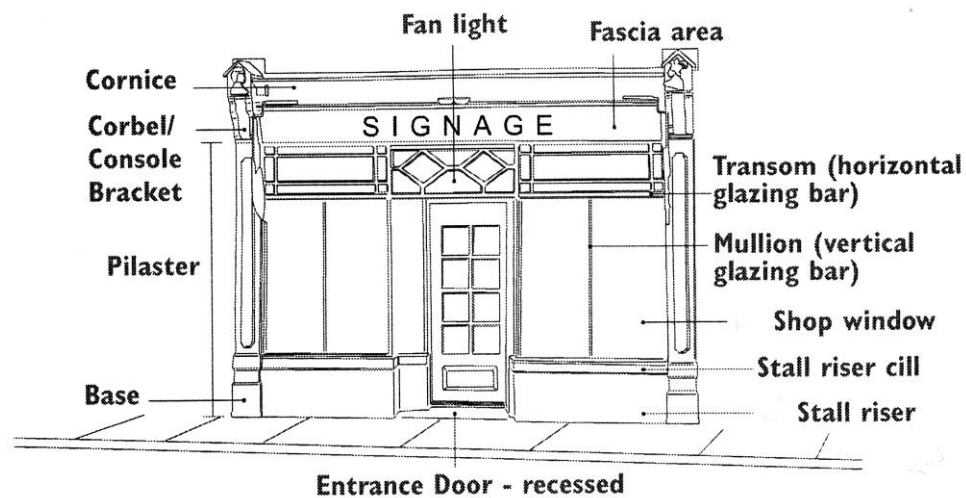
Building Regulations seek to ensure that any development complies with relevant building codes.

All shops must now ensure that buildings are fully accessible under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Conservation Area Consent

Conservation Area Consent does not apply to listed buildings. It is required for partial or total demolition of a building in a conservation area. This includes the removal of a shop front or any features that give character to a building.

5 Shop Front Components



Fascia

The fascia board in general is where the shop's name is located. The size, depth and material of the fascia plays an important part in the overall aesthetics of the shop front. Oversized fascia boards with inappropriate lettering on a background of unsuitable material or colour can look unsightly and mar the overall proportions of the building. Historic fascia boards, usually made of wood, take up about 10% of the shopfront area with the lettering centralised. All lettering should be hand painted. Most traditional fascias do not exceed 380mm in depth

Fascias should not cover up any architectural features, nor should they extend beyond the shop front surround or impinge on the upper part of the building above the cornice.

- A visual gap should be left between the first floor windowsills and the top of the fascia
- Fascia design should be appropriate to the character and appearance of the building
- Excessively deep fascias or those composed of garish modern materials are not acceptable
- Sign written lettering or individually applied letters are most appropriate for fascias
- Letter typeface should be clear and simple and not more than 60% of the fascia height with 20% spacing above and below. Word length should be no more than 80% of the fascia length
- New fascias should not be placed over existing ones
- Where buildings have been joined together at ground level into one unit, fascias should be kept separate with strong vertical divisions between the buildings

Pilaster

The pilasters are the vertical columns at each side of the shop front. They are a traditional building feature and are present in many of the shop fronts in Church Stretton. They are designed with a plinth and capital and establish a visual division between shop fronts. Shop owners can enhance pilasters by highlighting design features to add character.

The choice of the material for any new pilasters should be compatible with the rest of the building design and the street scene. In a Conservation Area, on older or listed buildings, where the original shop front details exist (cornices, corbels, pilasters) these should be retained or replaced in the same style.

- Original or traditional pilasters and corbels should not be altered or removed.
- Where they are missing or partially missing they should be reinstated
- Each pilaster at either side of the frontage should be treated in the same way.
- A traditional pilaster should have a base, shaft and capital (corbel). A feature should be made of the pilaster in its entirety.



Typical examples of pilasters using a variety of materials

Cornice

The cornice, Italian for ledge, provides a horizontal division between the shop front and the building above. In a traditional shop front, it is usually of timber construction. Originally cornices were designed to throw rainwater free from the building walls.



Examples of corbels providing support to cornices

Corbel

Corbels provide support to the cornice and are located at the top of the pilasters, either side of the shop front. Corbels can be plain or highly decorative. Where shop fronts have decorative pilasters and corbels, the design elements can be enhanced by being picked out in gold, black or white.



Contrasting styles of corbels

Stall riser

Stall risers provide the bottom frame element to the shop window as well as affording protection from street wear and tear. They also have advantages for security as they add physical strength to the shop front. For this reason the construction of stall risers is important. They should be made from hard wearing material such as thick timber, brick or render. If timber is used it should rest on a brick plinth to prevent rotting. Where historic stall risers are in evidence (glass blocks, tiles, ironwork) these should be retained or reinstated. Entrance doors should be part glazed with lower timber panels consistent with the depth of the stall risers, to provide visual continuity across the shop front.

- Where stall risers exist, they should be retained and maintained and where they have been removed, they should be replaced
- Stall risers should be between 300mm and 700mm in height
- Excessively low or absent stall risers are not acceptable

Doors and Entrances

Recessed doorways are common in older and traditional shop fronts. They can be used as a way of bridging any change of level between the shop floor and the street. Recessed doors in period shops should be kept or replaced where removed, especially in a Conservation Area or in a listed building. Design features such as mosaic floor entrances should be preserved.



Recessed period doorway incorporating a mosaic design displaying the shop's name

The door should always reflect the character and period of the building and be in proportion to the upper part of the building as well as adjoining buildings.

Glazed doors or large expanses of glass should utilise some device to break up the area. This could be a logo, contrasting colour panel or decorative feature to avoid accidental contact by the public. The haphazard use of stickers and posters is not acceptable.

The design of the door and the proportion of glass used should relate to the shop front and use similar mouldings, materials and colours. Street numbers applied directly on to the glass can be used to good effect.

- Where a recessed entrance is present it must be retained. Typically they should be set back from the building frontage by at least 850mm
- The entrance surface should be laid with stone, tiles or tessera. Care should be taken to ensure that the surface is slip resistant.
- The shop door should be designed so that the kick plate is at a similar height to the stall risers.



Decorative upper glass panel of a period door

Windows and glazing

The size and style of the windows including glazing bars, mullions and transoms, must be in scale and proportion to the shop front area and the building as a whole.

Larger flat areas of glazing in a Conservation Area will not normally be accepted. Where glazing in shop windows is to be divided up, then this should reflect any existing divisions in the upper floors. Windows should be designed to reflect the historic and architectural period of the building as a whole.



Attractive use of curved glass sadly marred by stickers

Late 19th and early 20th century shop windows often incorporate stained or etched glass. These details should be retained or re-introduced.



Examples of retained stained glass

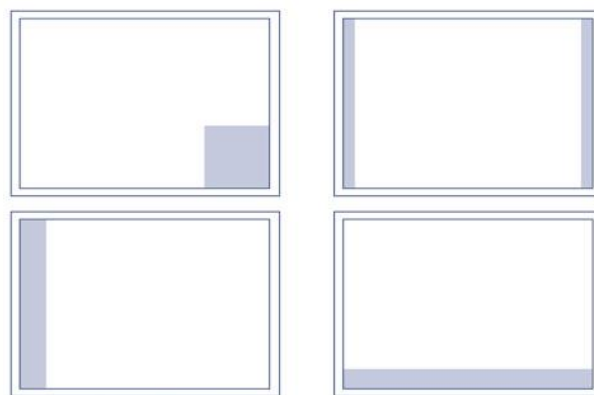
Frames, mullions and transoms should usually be made of timber, especially in historic buildings. Aluminium and composite frames should not be used in a Conservation Area as they will have a negative impact on the overall character of the shop and street scene.

Etching of glass in a modern glazed window, if tastefully done, can add character.



Modern glass etching in a period frame

Window stickers, posters and hand-written notices placed on the inside of shop windows produce an untidy and unacceptable appearance, especially on windows of character in a Conservation Area. Window stickers should only take up 10% of any window, positioned as below.



Blinds and Canopies

General planning permission will be required to install a shop blind or canopy. The main purpose of a shop blind is to protect goods in the windows from sun damage. Only where existing traditional horizontal blinds and fittings exist will their retention and repair be encouraged.



Original horizontal retractable blind and casing

Where blinds are used, they should always be of the retractable type so that the fascia is not permanently obscured. In a Conservation Area Dutch canopies are not usually considered to be in keeping and as such are not encouraged. Highly patterned multi-coloured or plastic blinds are also not suitable in a Conservation Area.



Inappropriate use of Dutch canopies

Canopies should not extend further than the width of the shop front nor should they cover up architectural details such as corbels.

Signs

Usually the main sign associated with any shop front is the fascia sign. The size, location (if not a fascia) colour and design of a sign and the style of lettering used upon it can greatly enhance or detract from the appearance of the shop and character of the building. An excessive number of signs on, or outside (A-boards) a building is unacceptable, detracting from the intrinsic architecture of the building. One A-board per shop is acceptable.

Planning regulations for external signs are complex and often confusing (see section 4 on planning)

Illuminated signs

One of the main threats to a Conservation Area comes in the guise of illuminated signs. Where external lighting is proposed it should be minimal and discrete.

In general illuminated signs would require Advertising Consent. In the Conservation Area and on listed buildings all illuminated signs will require Advertising Consent.

- The use of flashing light sources, cathode ray tubes and neon lighting is considered inappropriate.
- Internally illuminated signs and illuminated projecting box signs are not acceptable.
- Arrays of swan necked lights to illuminate fascia boards are unacceptable visual clutter.



Inappropriate use of signs on the windows

Hanging Signs

Hanging signs are used to identify shops from a distance. It is therefore important that hanging signs are in keeping with the street scene and town, especially in a Conservation Area. The sign and supporting bracket should be designed to enhance the character of the building. A single hanging sign should be installed at fascia level at one or the other end of the fascia board but should not obscure any architectural features such as pilasters or corbels. Installing hanging signs above or below fascia level is not advised.

The overall size of the sign should be in proportion to the fascia, shop front and the building as a whole.

Hanging signs have traditionally been a feature of historic shop fronts and listed buildings. Signs should be made of painted timber with hand-painted lettering and cast metal fittings. Any historic ironwork on signs should be retained and renovated.

Upper storey signs

As a general rule, signs will not be permitted above fascia level. Where businesses are operating from the upper storey, signs may take the form of etched window signs which are in proportion and sympathetic to those on the lower shop frontage and adjacent buildings.

Large external banners and advertising posters should not be hung from upper storeys.

Security Shutters

If security shutters are considered necessary, a balance should be struck between security and the visual impact on the street scene.

The following may be used without spoiling the character of the building:

- Laminated glass. This is the most preferable as it has little if any impact on the shop front.
- Internal Grills. These do not require planning permission unless the shop is a listed building (Listed Building Consent will be required). Any housing for such grills should be concealed behind the fascia or shop window.

Removable mesh grills are not usually acceptable as they are intrusive on the street scene.

Solid or external roller shutters that prevent visibility into the shop outside operating hours will not be permitted.

6 Colours and materials

The colour used on shop fronts can make or mar the street scene. Sensitive use of colour which respects the age and setting of the building, offers scope to improve the shopping experience. In general rich dark colours and muted tones help to emphasise and highlight a window. Bright gaudy colours detract from what is on display.



Dark blue woodwork against the pale rendering emphasises the contents of the display window

When selecting colours, care should be taken to check the colours used on adjoining premises so that colours do not clash. The window frames, door frames, pilasters and corbels should also be painted in dark or muted colours. Fascias, signs and blinds should tie in with the chosen colour scheme. The cumulative impact of inappropriate colours can be detrimental to the overall character of the street scene.

Painted detailing on stall risers, pilasters and corbels can add to an historic shop front. Colours which are acceptable for this purpose are gold, black and white.



Detailing picked out in gold on pilasters, corbels and stall risers

An indication of acceptable paint colours for rendering and paintwork can be found in Appendix A.

Choice of materials is particularly important especially on period shop fronts. Timber has been traditionally used. Fascias should be made of soft wood with hand-painted signage.

Other acceptable materials for shop fronts are marble, stone, brick (in keeping with the whole building) and cast iron. Within a Conservation Area and on listed buildings and older unlisted buildings, the use of non-traditional materials such as fibreglass, plastics (shiny or reflective) or uncoated aluminium, along with synthetic tiles, is not considered appropriate.

Where a shop front is constructed of historic brick and detailing, this should not be painted over.

- Use of traditional materials to be encouraged
- Use of metal sheeting, shiny or reflective plastics and unpainted wood should be avoided
- Colours should be based on those in Appendix A



Adaptation of corporate “house style” colours and effective blending with building materials

Empty Shops

Where shops are empty for a period of time, every effort should be made to keep the external appearance neat and clean. Where possible shop owners should be encouraged to maintain window displays. This could include utilising local displays (school artwork, local artists).

Material Change

Where shops are no longer used for trading and have been sold for domestic habitation the shop front must remain as originally intended, retaining the historic characteristics which form part of the street scene. Choice of external finish and paint colour should remain in keeping with adjacent shop fronts and upper storeys and should not detract from the street view.

Design Details

Many shop fronts have detailing dating from the time the building was built. These may take the form of pilaster decoration, ornate corbels, decorative ironwork, stained glass, blind housings, decorated mullions and ornate pipework (see cover and P22-23). Where a shop front has period features, they should be retained, repaired or replaced. Photographic evidence of shop frontages in Church Stretton through the ages has been archived for reference.

An illustrated shop front audit will be available in 2013



Food for thought !



A decorative "cap" to a mullion



*Ornate entrance canopy,
incorporating owner's initials*



*Original retractable blind in
cornice*



Ornate "cap" on mullion



A pilaster decorative motif. Could be highlighted in relief to good effect

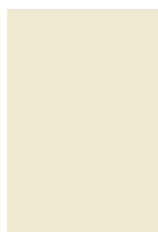


Original glass ceiling over entrance reflecting the curved glass windows

Appendix A: Paint Colours and External Woodwork

These colours are from the Farrow and Ball colour chart. They are indicative of the colour palette considered suitable for a Conservation Area.

For Rendering



New White
(59)



Cream
(44)



Hardwick White
(5)



Lamp Room Grey
(88)

For Paintwork:



Fowler Pink
(39)



Book Room Red
(50)



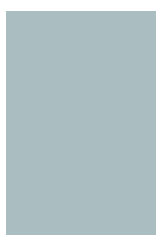
Radicchio
(96)



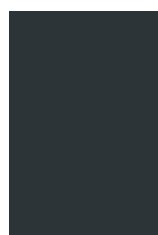
Rectory Red
(217)



Stone Blue
(86)



Lulworth Blue
(89)



Hague Blue
(30)



Cooks Blue
(237)



Olive
(13)



Breakfast Room Green
(81)



Cooking Apple Green
(32)



Green Smoke
(47)



This guidance has been prepared by Church Stretton Town Council
as part of a suite of community planning documents,
including the Shop Front Design Guide Appendix B
and the Church Stretton Town Design Statement

Shop Front Design Guide v2

Church Stretton Town Council June 2014