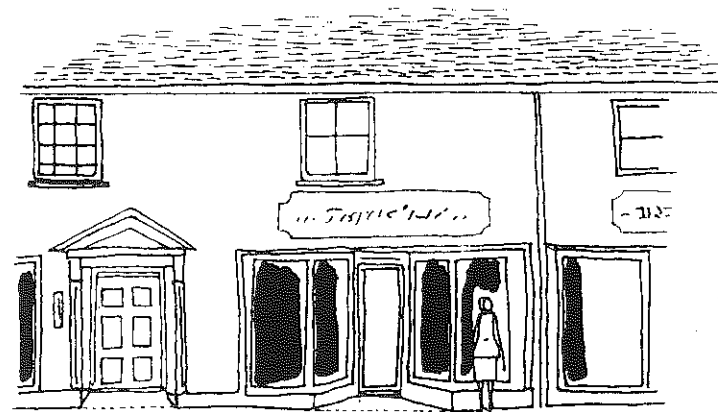


APPENDIX G
GUIDELINES FOR SHOPFRONTS
AND SIGNS

WHY IS GUIDANCE NEEDED?

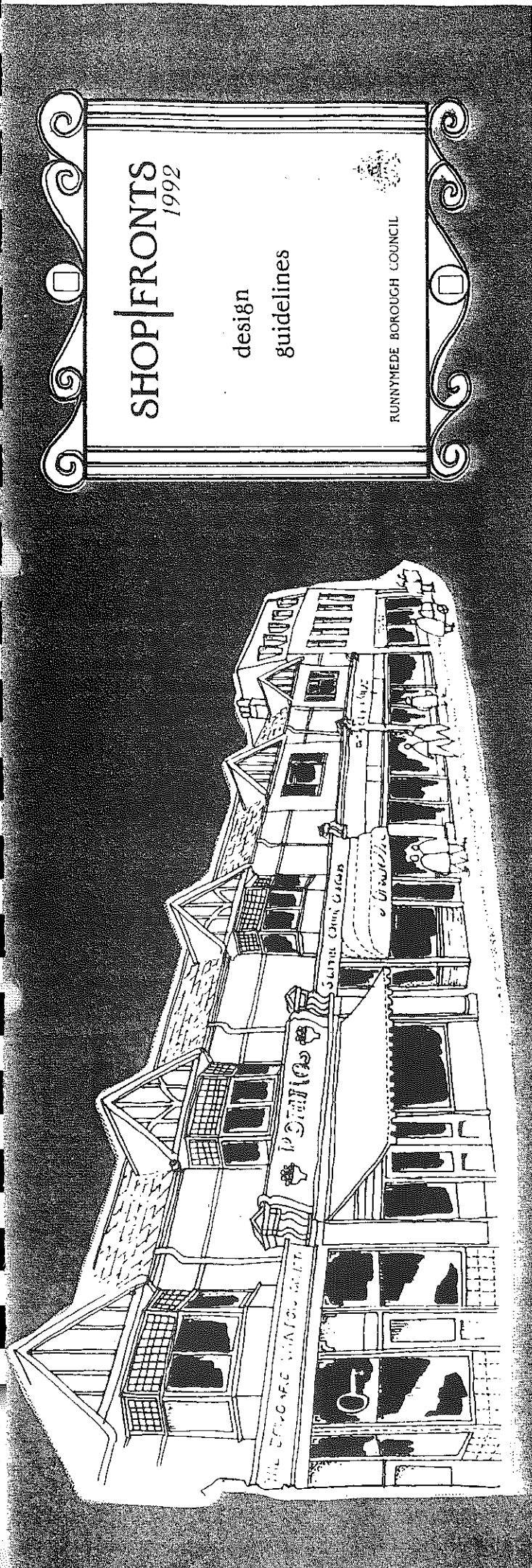
In urban areas, the street scene and atmosphere depends to a large extent on the design quality of shopfronts, and advertisement material displayed. This leaflet offers guidance to all involved in the installation or alteration of shopfronts, and encompasses not only shops, but also non-retail premises such as restaurants, banks, estate agents and building societies. The erection of a new shopfront is development requiring planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 s55 and consent in accordance with the Building Regulations 1985.

Often shopfront replacements pay little attention to the building context, and introduce 'standard' frontages and elements irrespective of the lines and qualities of the existing building. Building within a context is important, and most especially when the building concerned has established architectural merit, or is in an area of historic character, such as a conservation area. This leaflet gives special emphasis on shopfronts in conservation areas, but the broad principles should be followed throughout the Borough. These guidelines cannot cover every design possibility for shopfronts, and there will invariably be different and conflicting interests and trading patterns. The Council is primarily concerned with a balanced and visually pleasing street-scene, and to retain historical identity and character.



Shop fronts, Egham High Street - Classical proportions and moulding, well integrated with listed buildings identity.

Modern or refurbished shop fronts can pick up or maintain some of these qualities of design, if not the details. Modern shop fitting tends to favour large sheets of plate glass, without embellishment. Good design embraces detailed relationships and mere shopfitting economics, or bad proportions, can swamp the overall image.



SHOPFRONTS
1992

design
guidelines

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SHOPFRONT GUIDANCE

(ORIGINALLY PRINTED AS PART OF THE CHERSTEY CONSERVATION AREA LEAFLET 4/94)

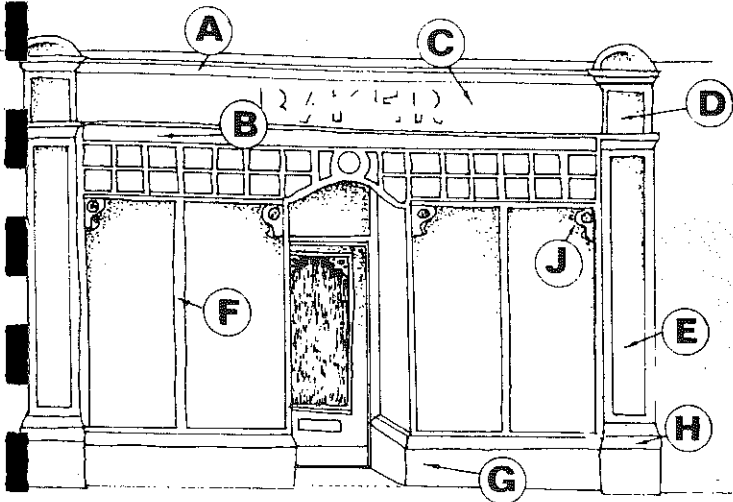
6. Shopfronts

- the loss of traditional shopfronts and other attractive architectural features in the Conservation Area will be resisted;
 - where new shopfronts are acceptable they should reflect the character of the building as a whole and use traditional shopfront design elements, including stallrisers, mullions and consoles. Large unrelieved plate glass windows and doors will be resisted;
 - new shopfronts should be constructed in traditional materials with framing and fascias in painted timber. Plastic and aluminium will be resisted;
 - fascias should be of an appropriate depth for the scale of the building and should not obscure the first floor windows or other architectural details;
 - shopfronts should respect the architectural rhythm of the street and where they incorporate two or more façades should be subdivided accordingly;
 - where awnings or blinds are fitted they should be of the traditional 'butcher's blind' style rather than inappropriate Dutch blinds
- and the use of shiny plastic should be avoided;
- signage should be kept to a minimum and be of an appropriate style for the building. Corporate styles will be expected to be adapted to suit the character of the Conservation Area;
 - where illumination is considered appropriate it should be external and achieved through the use of unobtrusive lanterns. It will be expected to be kept to a minimum.

Traditional Shopfront Elements



TRADITIONAL SHOP FRONTS



Elements of the traditional shopfront

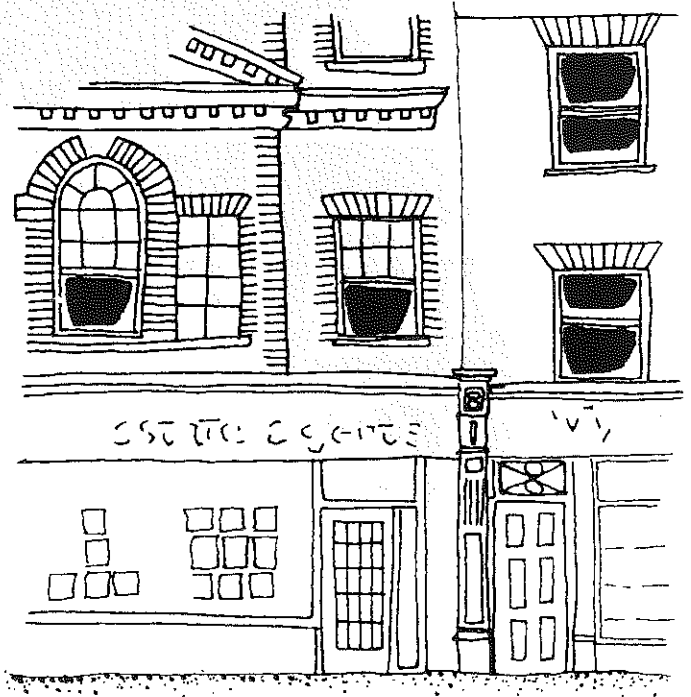
- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| A. Cornice | F. Mullion |
| B. Architrave | G. Stallriser |
| C. Fascia | H. Moulding |
| D. Corbel | J. Gusset |
| E. Pilaster | |

The signboard fascia and the party wall pilasters form a frame to the premises. Traditional emphasis of the party wall between premises is by a "book-end" treatment with fascias spanning between. The upper-floor windows and detail emphasise the frontage. In a row of shops, providing the lines of the fascia are maintained a reasonable variety of shop front detail is in order. However, if two or more shops are replaced by a large multiple or showroom, and a title fascia is taken across the party wall face, the balance of the street facade is broken. Replacing masonry with light steel columns, to achieve an unobstructed showroom window, can produce unsatisfactory visual results. In conservation areas especially, this would not normally be acceptable.

COLOUR AND MATERIALS

Colours used on fascias and shopfronts should be sympathetic with adjacent property. Often a co-ordinated colour scheme is a major contribution to the building or street, however modest its basic qualities. Every encouragement will be given to imaginative colour schemes which contribute to the environmental context, and the use of traditional techniques such as gilding. Colours used on the shop front should relate to the building above. Acrylic, mosaic, shiny or fluorescent materials are unacceptable in conservation areas, and careful consideration will need to be given to fascia illumination.

2 adjacent frontages, Guildford Street, Chertsey. Left: ground floor frontage removed, steel columns internally, symmetrical classical brick facade balanced on plate glass void. Right: traditional form, doorcase, pilasters and corbels echoing adjoining shop (eg. foursquare repeated motif at head).



Traditionally, wood and metal would have formed the structural part of the shop front, and this standard should ideally be maintained within conservation areas, and in buildings of a vernacular construction or appearance. In other shopping areas, the material of the shop front might reflect quality and at the same time be unobtrusive. Whilst stained or painted hardwood would be preferable, economics often dictate modern shop fitting techniques, and here bronze anodised aluminium window and door frames would be preferred over natural satin-finished aluminium, the standard solution.

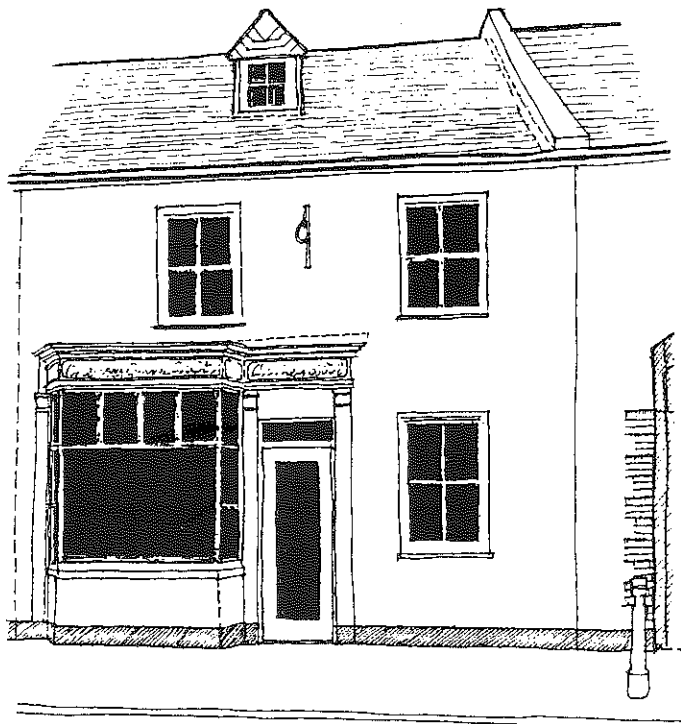
FASCIAS AND LETTERING

Over-large shop signs and badly designed or over bright fascias and advertisements can have a detrimental effect on the visual quality of an area. Within conservation areas, box fascias are generally not acceptable because of their bulk, and particularly so if internally illuminated. On older buildings a timber fascia is more appropriate, perhaps with painted lettering by traditional signwriters, often with three dimensional effects, or an italic script.

Alternatively, individual applied lettering of appropriate material can be used, though if too thick can appear clumsy when viewed from below.

In some modern buildings, the fascia is lined level with the first floor, which may give a very weak appearance. Traditionally, the depth of fascia is not greater than one quarter the height from pavement level to the bottom of the fascia. Existing windows, and architectural details, such as cill, pilasters, and string courses, should not be obscured by fascias, projecting signs or advertisements.

A tradition of strong robust lettering applied direct to wall surfaces might be worthy of revival especially in conservation areas. Lettering, of a different order, can be applied direct on to the shop window glass. The lettering techniques of the monumental mason can be utilised on appropriate buildings. In all cases, the information should be kept to a minimum, such as the trade and shop's name. Graphics are a very important part of the urban visual scene, and should be professionally designed and co-ordinated.



Excellent reconstructed classic shopfront in Guildford Street, Chertsey. Note balance with upper storey windows, pilasters emphasizing openings, lining up of elements, interaction of 2 ideal proportions (square and Georgian pane). Well-designed black and white graphics reflect the elegance of design.

DOORWAYS AND IDENTITY

Entrances to shops should be at pavement level, with a flush threshold, as a consideration for the disabled and elderly. A non-slip ramp is preferred to steps, which, however, may be an integral part of the retained design. A separate leaflet on "Access for the Disabled" is obtainable (Planning Guideline No.2). Door-swings and widths should be adequate for wheelchair users.

A recessed doorway is an important feature of many traditional shop fronts, giving depth and a bay-like treatment to the display windows. Current trends, in structure, security and trading patterns, tend to discourage such features, leading to a flat and less interesting appearance. With emphasis on the fascia and display establishing the house image, the shop front, especially in the large multiples, has lost its separateness, and, in fact, in many indoor shopping malls, it has disappeared completely. This is not acceptable in conservation areas, and those other areas of identifiable character. It may be that a standard company logo or title applied to a fascia may not be appropriate in terms of material used, scale, illumination, or style of lettering. In conservation areas, and when associated with listed buildings, the standard house style may have to be modified.

SIGNS

Projecting signs, on brackets, should be used with restraint, on a special building, for example a pub, with a painted timber hanging sign. Smaller signs, which the eye can separate from the buildings, can enhance a street, but should not be displayed above fascia level. Illuminated signs need planning consent, under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1984, except for signs indicating medical services such as "CHEMIST". Planning regulations on lettering should be consulted, especially in conservation areas where lettering is restricted to 30cms (12 inches) maximum height, though individual non-illuminated letters can be permitted up to 75cms in other areas. Where the upper floors of buildings are used for business purposes, any lettering should be applied directly to the window, and be not more than 10cms (4 inches) high. The wording should relate only to a separate business above, and not to the commercial use at street level.

BLINDS AND CANOPIES

Some shops, by reason of the type of goods on display, require blinds, and these can add liveliness and colour to the street scene. Where provided, the blind should be fully retractable and located along the bottom side of the fascia. Unless carefully considered, blinds and canopies can detract from the architecture, particularly in conservation areas. Dutch blinds and semi-circular folding canopies may be appropriate in less critical situations, but not where their form and proportions would obliterate the character of the building.

Fixed canopies are too dominant for the street scene, and here their height and horizontality detracts totally from the accepted urban scene.



STALLRISERS

Stallrisers, in traditional shopfronts, form the base to the composition. As important elements, they should be retained on historical buildings and in conservation areas generally where they have been removed, and further changes to the shopfront are envisaged, consideration should be given to their reinstatement, or replacement in the spirit of the original, as a base to the shopfront. Classic stallrisers are of hard wood and panelled but brick stallrisers can look very clumsy, and crude brick-on-edge details should be avoided.

Subjected to hard wear and staining, an adequate stallriser provides protection for the window from feet, splashback, dogs and the weather. In modern shop-fitting the cill often sits directly on the paving or on a hard impervious skirting, such as terrazzo, quarry-tile, mosaic or even granite. Though widely used elsewhere, none of these materials would normally appear suitable for listed buildings or conservation areas.

SHOPS ON CORNER SITES

There has been pressure from retailers to convert the traditional double-aspect corner shop to single aspect by blocking in the side window. Such moves are detrimental to the symmetry of the ground-floor, resulting in the whole corner appearing visually discordant, and will generally be resisted. Blank windows displaying nothing but stick-on notices of discount offers are also very questionable.

CONSULTATION

It is recommended that before submitting a planning application and Building Regulations approval for a shopfront or advertisement, the shopkeeper or agent should consult the Borough Planning Department, telephone 01932 838383. The final decision rests with the Planning and Development Committee.

A Swift BA DipTP.MRTPI
Borough Planning Officer
Runnymede Borough Council
Civic Offices, Station Road
Addlestone, Surrey
KT15 2AH