



rhondda cynon taf  
local development plan  
*cynllun datblygu lleol*

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

# Shopfront Design

October 2014



STRONG HERITAGE | STRONG FUTURE  
**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**  
TREFTADAETH GADARN | DYFODOL SICR



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## 1. Introduction

Attractive and successful shopping areas are integral to the vitality of towns and villages and often form the heart of communities. Many of the towns and villages in Rhondda Cynon Taf have a proud history as commercial centres and remain important centres for retail activity.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides advice on the design of shopfronts and sets out the Council's expectations for shopfront design throughout the County Borough. In addition to this SPG, leaflets have been prepared providing detailed advice in respect of Pontypridd and Aberdare Town Centres and on Shopfront Security.

## 2. Policy Context

Good design which respects its context is a key aim of the planning system. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) requires that Local Development Plans (LDPs) provide clear policies setting out design expectations. Policy AW6 of the Rhondda Cynon Taf LDP requires increased design standards in new developments. The following extract from policy AW6 will be a key consideration when determining applications relating to shopfronts:-

Development Proposals will be supported where: -

- They are of a high standard of design, which reinforces attractive qualities and local distinctiveness and improves areas of poor design and layout;
- They are appropriate to the local context in terms of siting, appearance, scale, height, massing, elevational treatment, materials and detailing;
- In the case of proposals for new and replacement shop fronts and signage, they make a positive contribution to the street scene;
- In the public realm and key locations such as town centres, major routes, junctions and public spaces, the character and quality of the built form is to a high standard of design;
- Schemes incorporate flexibility in design to allow changes in use of buildings and spaces as requirements and circumstances change;
- The development reflects and enhances the cultural heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf;

### 3. What Is Good Shopfront Design and Why Is It Important?

The appearance of shopfronts and the combination of window displays, shop signage and canopies form the dominant visual impression of a shopping area's character, and are essential to the way in which shoppers experience their environment.

Good shopfront design is achieved when these elements create a balanced and proportioned facade, which sits comfortably on the building and within the wider context.

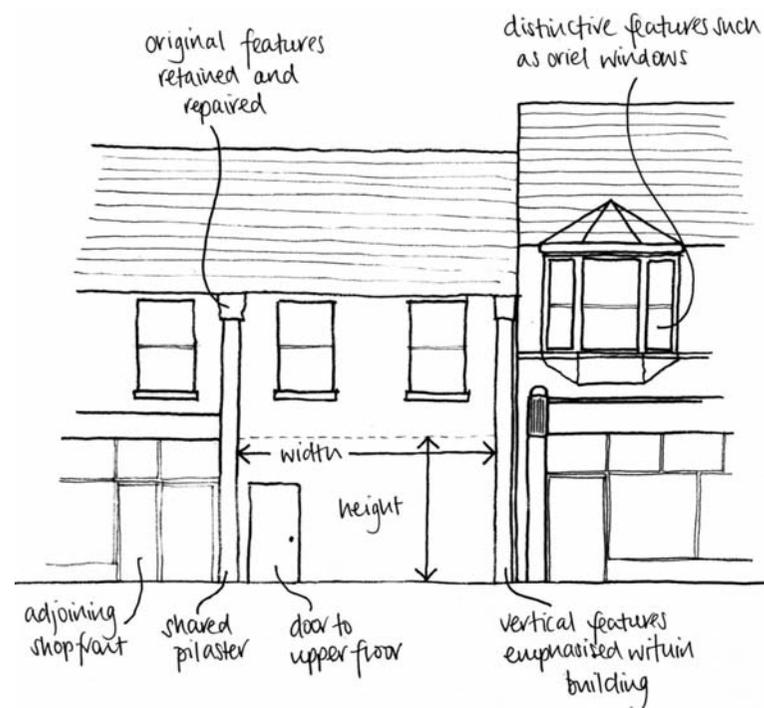
Good design is essential to the creation of a high quality built environment. The promotion of good design and management of shopping streets can help to revitalise local centres and help them to remain an essential and vibrant part of the communities in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

#### How do you assess the building's context?

Many of our town and village centres comprise buildings and streets which are of significant architectural quality and an important part of the distinctive character of the centre. Buildings and shopfronts vary greatly across the County Borough, adding interest, texture and quality to shopping areas.

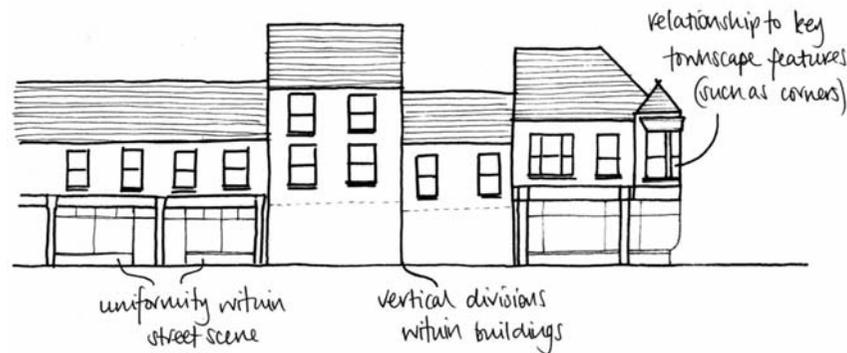
Understanding the qualities of the building and the surrounding townscape is essential to creating well-designed shopfronts which are appropriate to their context. There are a number of important elements to look for when assessing the character of a building. These include:

- Building proportions, such as width and height
- Architectural style, details and materials
- Historic value
- Horizontal and vertical rhythms within the building
- Existing architectural features
- Width of pavement
- Features that detract from the building



In addition to assessing the building it is also important to consider the wider streetscene, which will include neighbouring buildings and their shopfronts and surrounding public spaces. Important elements to consider when assessing the streetscene include:

- Style and proportions of neighbouring buildings and shopfronts
- Level of uniformity or variety within streetscene
- Conservation value
- Visual prominence of shop / building within streetscene
- Repeated architectural features in surrounding shopfronts
- Opportunities for improvement



Consideration should be given as to whether the proposed shopfront will stand out within the streetscene or blend in. The building's context may lend itself towards an innovative, modern design or the retention of existing features with the aim of achieving harmony with the wider area.

Consideration should also be given to any official designation given to a building or area, particularly whether a building is listed or in a conservation area.

### **Should you retain, repair or replace a shopfront?**

Where existing shopfronts include features which are of quality or original to the building, consideration should be given to whether these can be retained and repaired.

Original features may have been covered or damaged by subsequent renovations, and strong consideration should be given as to whether these could be reinstated within a more appropriately designed shopfront.

Consideration should be given to retaining or reinstating lost features where shops form part of a row within a single building and where the uniformity of the shopfronts forms a strong part of the character of the building.

Where shopfronts do not have original features; are of poor appearance; are unsuitable to the function of the shop; or where no shopfront currently exists, consideration should be given to how a new shopfront can be sympathetically integrated into the building.

Before



*Where existing shopfronts include high quality elements, renovation and repair will be the most suitable solution*

After





**What are the principles of good shopfront design?**

The features below are typical of traditional shopfronts and, provide a sound basis for shopfront design in many buildings and streets within the County Borough, whether a traditional or modern style is chosen. New and

replacement shopfronts will generally be expected to include the following elements.



## Other approaches to shopfront design

Modern buildings may have very different styles and proportions to older buildings in the County Borough and a different design solution may be appropriate. For example, the omission of window frames and stallrisers or the replacement of the fascia with an internal sign located behind glazing may be an appropriate design in the context of the streetscene or host building. In some cases, high quality original or imaginative modern design may also be used to integrate modern elements into older buildings.



*Modern shopfront design can include innovative and imaginative use of materials, colours and proportions*

## Inclusive Access

Planning Policy Wales states that one of the key aspects of good design is ensuring access for all. Doorways and entrances that are suitable for all users including disabled people, parents with pushchairs and the elderly should always be considered in all shopfront proposals. Advice in relation to inclusive access is included in Part M of the Building Regulations.

## 4. Shopfront Security

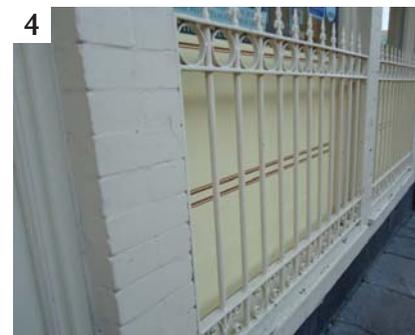
Owners and occupiers of retail premises want to ensure their businesses are secure when they are not open, and external roller shutters are often used for this purpose. While the Council recognises the need and desire to ensure premises are secure, these shutters can have an adverse impact on the building and the streetscene through obscuring shopfronts, eroding their character and creating an unwelcoming environment when premises are not open.

Therefore, consideration should be given to other security measures prior to the use of external roller shutters. This chapter sets out security measures that are likely to have a less adverse visual impact and, depending on their design and location, are generally considered preferable to external roller shutters.

- **Use of stallrisers (1)** Use of a stallriser can help prevent wear and tear, damage and vandalism caused by kicking windows.
- **Dividing shop windows into multiple panes, with internally reinforced frames (2)** Dividing shop windows up rather than having one expanse of glass makes them less susceptible to damage.
- **Securing recessed doorways with wrought iron or steel gates (3)** Gates are generally a more attractive form of securing doorways than roller shutters.
- **Fixed railings (4)** The use of appropriately designed railings can help to prevent vandalism. Railing can also be removable as well as fixed.
- **Use of internal lattice/ brick-bond grilles (5)** Internal lattice/ brick-bond grilles do not normally require planning permission, although listed building consent is likely to be required where a building is listed. They tend to have significantly less impact on the streetscene than external roller shutters.
- **Removable/demountable mesh grilles of an appropriate design and colour**
- **Wooden shutters**

- **Appropriate lighting** Can act as a deterrent to crime.
- **Use of toughened/ laminated glass** (although this may not be appropriate on historic shopfronts that retain their original glass).
- **Anti-shatter window film**

It is important to note that whilst these measures generally have a less adverse visual impact than external roller shutters, they will only be acceptable if they are designed to a satisfactory standard and are appropriate for the building/ location.





If alternatives are clearly demonstrated not to be appropriate, external metal roller shutters may be considered, depending on the type and location of the building. **However, solid metal roller shutters are unlikely to be considered acceptable (6).**

External roller shutters with the following characteristics are more likely to be considered acceptable, but this does depend on the design and building/location.

- **Lattice or brick-bond grille style roller shutters (7)** This style of shutter allows the shopfront to be seen and is generally less foreboding than a solid metal shutter.
- **The Box Housing (8)** is hidden behind the fascia. It should be noted that the fascia should still be flush to the building surface, as is shown in this photograph, it is not appropriate to just attach it to a projecting box. Other elements of the housing should also be appropriately integrated.
- **Painting or Powder Coatings (9)** Painting or powder coating helps to integrate the shutter with the shopfront. Powder coating is generally preferred as it tends to require less maintenance.
- **Individual Shutters (10)** Individual shutters are fitted to cover just the glazed area of windows and the door.
- **Perforated Roller Shutters (11)** Perforated roller shutters may also be acceptable in some circumstances, but the use of alternatives will generally be preferred and should be considered first.

## 5. Planning Permission

Rights to carry out works to commercial premises without planning permission are very limited. Most alterations to shop fronts require planning permission, as do alterations to the upper floors of these buildings, such as replacing windows. Planning permission may also be required to change the use of a building.

In order to submit a planning application for a shopfront, generally the following elements will be required:

- Application form
- Existing plans and elevations at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100
- Proposed plans and elevations at a scale of 1:50 or 1:100
- Ordnance Survey location plan at a scale of 1:1250 with the site outlined in red
- Design and Access Statement
- Appropriate fee

It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list and further information may be required depending on the circumstances of the application. The Council's Planning Service can provide further advice.

Applications for shopfront signage may also require Advertising Consent.



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