Westmorland & Furness Council

westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

Westmorland and Furness Design Code: Shopfronts

Contents

Design Code for Shopfronts

This section of the design code applies to town and village shopfronts in street contexts rather than retail parks. It applies to new shopfronts as well as the alteration or replacement of existing shopfronts.

It supports the legacy local plan policies and national policy.

The Westmorland & Furness Design Code supports the implementation of design policies in the three legacy Local Plans, in particular Barrow DS5, Eden DEV5 and South Lakeland CS1.1 & DM2. It also supports all other policies that relate to design in the legacy local plans, made neighbourhood plans (NP/NDP), and other development plan documents including:

- *Allithwaite and Cartmel NDP AC1
- *Grange-over-Sands NP10
- Haversham & Hincaster NP HH1
- **Lazonby NP D2 & D3
- Penrith NP 1
- Upper Eden NDP2 & 4
- Arnside & Silverdale National Landscape (AONB) DPD AS08

*Has a supporting Design Code or ** Design Guide.

Each legacy Local Plan area has an associated guidance document specific to shopfront development. This Design Code should be read in conjunction with each respective document:

- Barrow Shopfront and Advertisement Design SPD
- Eden Shopfront and Advertisement Design SPD
- South Lakeland Shopfront Design Toolkit

Code is indicated by highlight boxes.

The text outside of the highlight boxes is guidance.

After each code are the policy reference numbers of the relevant legacy local plan policies that the code supports. For policies in plain text, the code is a requirement. For policies in *italics* the code is guidance.

This design code also supports the policies, guidance and codes of made Neighbourhood Plans. The policy links between the code and Neighbourhood Plans is are set out in the supporting document ‘Neighbourhood Plan Policy Review’.

Works to shopfronts on listed buildings will require listed building consent. Planning applications for shopfront works on listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas, locally listed buildings and non-designated heirtage assets will require a Design and Access Statement. Compliance with the code and its checklist will assist with preparing a Design and Access Statement.

For other development types return to the home page

1. Context

Introduction

1.1 The 'What makes Westmorland and Furness' section of this design code and the district's 'Key Aspects of Place' show how the district is a rich mosaic of different landscapes, localities, places, and settlements.

1.2 The starting point with any proposal for a new or altered shopfront is to fully consider the three steps to understanding context: surroundings, the site itself, and the historic environment.

Surroundings

- This is the local area surrounding a site. When we refer to 'surroundings' here, we mean the spaces, buildings, street, townscape, views, and features that are specific to the surroundings of the application site. The extent of the surroundings depends on how large the site is and where it sits in the townscape.

Site Analysis

- The site, the shop, shopfront and building itself also must be analysed. For example, the site analysis might identify level access or the locations of utilities as constraints, whereas inappropriate signage or poor quality past alterations can be identified as opportunities to make improvements to the shopfront.

Historic Assessment

- A heritage assessment considers all aspects of the historic environment whether they are designated or not. In the case of a shopfront, the historic assessment may consider the shopfront itself, the building it forms part of, shopfronts and buildings in the vicinity and spaces and features in the vicinity.

1.3 Context is not a fixed distance from the site nor is context made up of an identical set of factors that apply everywhere. Landform, views, sounds, activities, and communities are all important to context, but there may be other factors that are specific to the site and its surroundings. The checklist with this design code captures a range of factors that make up the context of sites in the district.

The Three Steps to Context

Step 1: Surroundings

CODE SF 1.1 Surroundings: Proposals for new shop fronts and alterations to existing shopfronts including signage must respond to the character of the surrounding area and wider setting, to reflect local distinctiveness by complementing and enhancing the existing built environment.

(Barrow: DS5, *DS6, GI1*; Eden: DEV5, EC3, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, LS1, *EC7*; South Lakeland: AS01, AS02, CS1.1, DM1, *AS08, CS8.10, DM2, DM20*)

1.4 To fully understand the surroundings of a proposal site, a short context study should be conducted. This should consider the existing shopfront and how it relates to the building it forms part of, neighbouring buildings, the contribution of the shopfront to the wider street, square or centre. This can be done through annotated photographs.

1.5 Including a context analysis is recommended to demonstrate how proposals consider the broader townscape. The proposal's relationship with the wider street and surroundings should reflect local character and materials, enhance the sense of place and respond positively to site opportunities.

1.6 The design quality of the surrounding shopfronts will vary. Where the surroundings or aspects of the surroundings exhibit poor design quality or lack local distinctiveness, these should not be replicated or incorporated into new design for the site's shopfront.

1.7 Analysis should provide a comprehensive understanding of the surroundings and should inform how the proposed development can integrate into its context.

1.8 **This design code includes a checklist to help you assess the site's surroundings**. Further information is also available in the **Summary Character Appraisal** and **Baseline**.

This view shows how the corner shopfront is just one component of an interesting and varied collection of shopfronts and buildings along a sweeping corner. Changes or replacement of the shopfront will affect the character of the wider frontages. Appleby.

The shopfronts and buildings are often of interest, but in town and village centres so are the spaces. Here in Kendal the market place meets Stricklandgate, part of the main north-south route through the town. The importance and past activity of these spaces will have shaped the development and uses of the buildings and shops.

The similarity of the design of these two sides of the corner shopfronts and the doorways either side suggest the shopfront window and door frames are original to the building, which dates from the mid-1800s. Ulverston.

Step 2: Site Analysis

CODE SF 1.2 Site Analysis: All proposals must include a site analysis to evaluate the constraints and opportunities of the specific site. This assessment must consider how the site's characteristics influence the proposed development, ensuring sensitivity to local context.

(Barrow: DS5, N1; Eden: DEV5, ENV1, ENV2, ENV3, ENV10; South Lakeland: AS02, CS1.1, DM1, DM3, *AS08, CS8.6, CS8.10, DM2*)

1.9 This study should analyse the shop and shopfront, building the shopfront is part of, and how this relates to the wider street or town or village.

1.10 Where there is an existing shopfront on the building:

a. Use the understanding context stages of this design code to establish whether the existing shopfront is entirely or partly of interest because of its age, architecture or design quality, materials, evidence of former use, historical association with a locally or nationally important organisation or business, artistic or craft value, harmony with the building or street frontage, or rarity or uniqueness. This will indicate to what degree the existing shopfront should be retained, repaired, and adapted, or where new work or restoration may be possible.

b. Consider how changes such as accessibility, lighting, signage, and climate change measures can be incorporated into the shopfront without harming its appearance, design quality, or heritage value.

1.11 **This design code includes a checklist to help you assess the site**. Further information is also available in the **Summary Character Appraisal** and **Baseline**.

CODE SF 1.3 Setting: Applicants must identify whether their proposal falls within or affects the setting of any landscape, ecological, cultural, and historic sites or designations.

(Barrow: DS5, N1; Eden: EC3, ENV1, ENV3, ENV10, *DEV5, EC7, ENV2*; South Lakeland: AS01, DM1, *CS8.6*)

1.12 Designations are specific areas recognised for their importance due to environmental, cultural, or historical significance. Statutory designations are legally recognised and protected by law, such as the Lake District World Heritage Site, Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas. Non-statutory designations, while not legally binding, are still important for local planning, such as locally listed buildings, or areas identified for their ecological value.

1.13 Where development falls within, or within the setting of, a designated National Landscape (Arnside & Silverdale, or the North Pennines), the relevant Management Plan gives a greater depth of information about the unique character of that area. This should be used to understand the Special Landscape Qualities that have led to the designation, such as dark skies and local distinctiveness, and how these can be protected and retained.

1.14 Details of sites and designations can be seen on our website's interactive policies map. Applicants can also access interactive mapping through Defra's Magic website or the Planning.gov website.

Step 3: Historic Assessment

CODE SF 1.4 Historic Assessment: Shopfront proposals must demonstrate how the proposal responds to the existing historic and cultural context, incorporating a detailed assessment of the heritage and design elements.

The applicant must demonstrate how the proposal makes a positive response to the existing historic townscape context.

Proposals must consider potential impacts on heritage assets (both designated and non-designated) and avoid harm to the significance of heritage assets.

(Barrow: DS5, HE2, HE3, HE4, N1, *DS2*; Eden: DEV5, ENV3, ENV10, *EC7, ENV2*; South Lakeland: AS08, CS1.1, DM1, DM3, *AS07, CS8.2, CS8.6, DM2*)

1.15 In most cases for buildings with shopfronts, the shopfront itself, and the building, parade, or street it forms part of, may be of heritage value, as may heritage assets that neighbour or are nearby the shopfront. A Heritage Statement must be produced where required to ensure comprehensive evaluation of the proposal's impact on heritage assets and the surrounding historic environment. The degree of detail and complexity of this will be proportionate to the nature of the development, the heritage asset(s) it affects and the nature of how it affects them.

1.16 This will include not only consideration of visual impacts but also any effects of contextual relationships, such as between the shopfront and the building it is part of, the wider row, parade or street, or town or village centre.

1.17 The Heritage Statement must clearly demonstrate an understanding of the significance and setting of any heritage assets affected by the proposal. Potential impacts (both direct and indirect) on that significance must then be reviewed and levels of potential harm evaluated. Historic England's Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, The Setting of Heritage Assets provides advice on understanding setting and its contribution to heritage significance. Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance sets out what to include in a Heritage Statement.

1.18 The Heritage Statement should support the design approach used in the application and enable an informed planning decision to be made. It should not be simply a list of sites and features.

1.19 The assessment must include:

- Designated heritage assets including: World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, etc. (details can be found on the National Heritage List for England, the Local Plan interactive map and the World Heritage Site website),
- Any relevant conservation area appraisals and management plans.
- Non-designated heritage assets – properties on the local list, archaeological sites, boundaries, historic street furniture, milestones, etc. (details can be found on the Historic Environment Record (HER))

- Discussion on how the development will affect the setting of a heritage asset must be included. This goes beyond a consideration of purely visual impacts to look at how change effects the way an asset is understood and experienced e.g. the design of a shopfront on the character of the building or street.

1.20 The Cumbria Historic Landscape Characterisation Database provides details of historical background and vernacular buildings. Developments should respond to the details corresponding to the Historic Landscape Character Assessment for their location.

1.21 If the site is in an area covered by a Neighbourhood Plan and any codes / guidance accompanying them or Conservation Area Management Plan, the proposed development should respond to any relevant design considerations provided in these documents. See Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments (2017) for further guidance.

1.22 This design code includes a checklist to help you prepare a heritage statement, if required. Further information is also available in the **Summary Character Appraisal** and **Baseline**.

This small former shop is part of a building that was formerly some sort of workshop or workplace. Historic assessment will help form an understanding of whether the two uses were historically related and how important this building and shopfront are within the wider village of Kirkoswald.

The shopfront is attached to a much older building that forms part of a very interesting-looking row of different buildings. It also faces a gateway into the churchyard of Penrith's parish church. This site has clearly had a long and varied history.

The shopfront itself can be of historic and architectural interest. This 19th century example has what appears to be a giant, broad sliding sash window as its shop window. This suggests the shopfront was once for a butcher's shop. It was common for butcher's shops to have sliding sashes so the window could be opened, and meat could be displayed to the street, like a market stall. Kendal.

The architecture of this building in Appleby suggests it was originally a house and later adapted to a shop at ground floor. Historic assessment will help form an understanding of how important the shop use is to the overall heritage value of the building and how significant are the components that make up the shopfront.

2. Climate

Introduction

2.1 Good design conserves natural resources including land, water, energy, and materials. This requirement is growing in importance in the face of a climate and ecological emergency.

2.2 Shopfront proposals must respond with designs that consider both the need to reduce carbon emissions (mitigation) and be resilient to the changing climate (adaptation) whilst remaining efficient in their use of natural resources whilst responding to their context and the historic environment.

Using sustainable building materials

CODE SF 2.1: Development must consider the use of sustainable construction materials and methods.

In order to minimise the embodied carbon profile of development proposals, applicants are to prioritise:

a) the re-use of materials;

b) new materials being sustainable and locally-produced; and

c) building structures which are adaptable and resilient to climate change.

d) the whole life costs of obtaining, maintaining, replacing and disposing of materials must be considered. Use locally sourced and non-toxic building materials that have low embodied carbon and can be recycled or re-purposed at the end of the building's life.

e) future adaptation, alteration or disassembly considering how current and future occupiers' needs may change.

(Barrow: C5, DS5, *HC1*; Eden: DEV5; South Lakeland: CS1.1, CS8.7, *CS8.6*)

2.3 The starting point is the shopfront and the building it is part of. To make best use of the embodied carbon, its structure and materials should be re-used as far as possible to minimise the carbon footprint of any new works.

2.4 Therefore, to minimise carbon generated through new and altered shopfronts, proposals should:

- Re-use adapt and upgrade existing shopfront, structures, and materials, especially materials that contribute to local distinctiveness such as locally quarried stone and slate or traditional joinery.
- Use locally sourced and/or low carbon building materials:
  - Sustainably sourced timber
  - Locally quarried building stone
  - Locally quarried slate
  - Natural lime for mortars, renders and limewashes

- Minimise the use of building materials that require large amounts of energy and resources to produce and/or cannot be readily recycled:
  - Concrete and cement, including in render and other finishes.
  - uPVC, aluminium and steel-framed glazing, windows and doors (regarding sustainability, aluminium is preferred to uPVC for its longer lifespan and greater ease of recycling. Timber is far longer lasting and more sustainable than aluminium, and is the most sustainable option.).
  - Avoid synthetic materials such as artificial / plastic cladding.
- Minimise the use of prefabricated building materials that can generally not be repaired and have a fixed lifespan, requiring more material to be brought in for replacement.
- Prioritise building methods and materials that can be disassembled and recycled.
- Design short-life systems and materials – for example mechanical and electrical installations – to be replaceable without requiring substantial alterations to long-life building elements, such as structure and external envelope.
- Avoid unnecessary lighting (e.g. out of hours, lighting the building as well as signage), which will reduce energy usage and therefore reduce climate impacts.

The shopfront on the left and former bank frontage on the right can be seen as both historic architecture and embodied carbon. The materials have been won from the ground, shaped and crafted, brought to site, and assembled as part of a structure that carries the storeys above. To replace and cart away these frontages would be a huge waste of embodied carbon. Barrow.

High quality timber that is richly detailed and has shifted and moved over time with the masonry of the building in Kirkby Lonsdale. The shopfront itself is a combination of newer and older components. These form an attractive, cohesive, and well-maintained whole.

Adapting to climate change

2.5 All development in Westmorland and Furness should be designed to adapt to the increasing effects of climate change – hotter summers, wetter winters, and increased risks of surface water flooding.

2.6 Climate adapted design must be achieved without resulting in increased emissions, for example from using air-conditioning to avoid overheating or unnecessary hard infrastructure for drainage.

2.7 For shopfronts, the key measures include:

a. Incorporating or reinstating built-in awnings over the shopfront. These were historically used to provide shelter from the rain and to stop shops from overheating from direct sunlight. They are therefore of much use in both wetter and sunnier conditions. They also help the shopfront and its finishes last longer by providing shade and shelter.

b. Incorporating natural ventilation such as vents over shop doors or windows. These can allow natural airflow through the building to manage heat and humidity.

c. The use of internal doors or vestibules to provide a greater buffer between the internal and external environment.

d. Designing in flood response measures. This can be fixtures so that floodgates can be slotted in front of doorways, making stallrisers robust and strong enough to take the force of floodwater, and using toughened and shatterproof glazing.

e. In older buildings there may be scope to restore shopfloor ceiling levels to their historic heights rather than have low suspended ceilings. The higher ceiling level helps to regulate heat and humidity better and can provide space for ceiling fans or air conditioning / circulation.

This shopfront in Penrith has a degree of shade and shelter provided by the cornice and recessed doorway. The awning just above the shop sign (with iron arms at either end) provides an excellent way of stopping the inside of the shop from overheating in strong sunlight, as well as providing shelter for customers

The awning over this shop window allows control over how much sunlight and daylight enter the shop, and provides shelter for outdoor seating. Penrith.

Climate: What we don't want to see

- Development proposals with a large carbon footprint due to the replacement rather than reuse of buildings, structures, and materials.
- Building components such as windows, doors, shopfront features, cladding, renders and rainwater goods that have short lifespans and create a short cycle or renewal and replacement.
- Shops that have a high carbon footprint to occupy due to a lack of built-in efficiencies such as passive solar gain and natural ventilation or require additional heating or cooling.

3. Identity

Building type, form and detailing

CODE SF 3.1 Contextual Design: Applicants must demonstrate how the analysis of the site and its context have informed the design of the proposal. Design must be locally distinctive and rooted in place.

'Design' here is all-encompassing and includes street and building layout, the hierarchy of spaces, streets and buildings, landscape and townscape response, building form, building design and materials.

(Barrow: DS5; Eden: DEV5, ENV2, ENV3, ENV10, HS2, *EC7*; South Lakeland: AS01, AS02, AS08, CS1.1, DM1, *CS8.10, DM2, DM20*)

3.1 The analysis of the shopfront, the building and their context set out earlier in this code are especially important for new work to a shopfront. A balance must be struck between providing the accommodation and access required and maintaining the character and local distinctiveness of the building and site. Shopfront design and character can have a strong influence over the character of streets, town and village centres.

3.2 Each shopfront, building and location is unique, therefore in order to satisfy the Design Code, this checklist should be considered as part of the design:

a. The quality, heritage value, and adaptability of the existing shopfront

Where there is an existing shopfront in situ on the building:

i. Use the understanding context stages of this design code to establish whether the existing shopfront is entirely or partly of interest because of its age, architecture or design quality, materials, evidence of former use, historical association with a locally or nationally important organisation or business, artistic or craft value, harmony with the building or street frontage, or rarity or uniqueness. This will indicate to what degree the existing shopfront should be retained, repaired, and adapted, or where new work or restoration may be possible.

ii. Consider how changes such as accessibility, lighting, signage, and climate change measures can be incorporated into the shopfront without harming its appearance, design quality, or heritage value.

Left: the good example of a shopfront respects the architecture of the building it forms part of, creating harmony between the lower and upper floors. Its vertical proportions and shallow fascia sign are attractive in their own right, but also complement the proportions of the rest of the building.

Right: this flat-looking shopfront splits the elevation in two with its deep, oversized fascia. The broad, squashed glass void created by the shopfront openings creates an unsatisfactory ‘base’ which gives no visual ‘support’ to the upper storeys.

b. Context and the Building

i. The shopfront forms part of a larger building, so consideration should be given in the design of the shopfront to the architecture, proportions, and materials of the rest of the building so that the shopfront and signage form a harmonious whole with the building.

ii. The structure of the building is also important – how high is the beam that is over the shopfront? This will govern how tall the shopfront windows will be. The shopfront should sit below the first floor windowsill and will need to work around any internal columns or structural parts of the elevation.

iii. The wider parade or street may offer inspiration or parameters for the design of a new shopfront. For example, the street may have a range of building styles, materials, ages, and proportions that gives greater

potential for innovation or maintaining variety through the design of a new shopfront. Conversely a highly uniform parade or street, or a highly traditional-looking village centre may provide clear prompts and parameters for shopfront design.

iv. Consider the microclimate and the path of the sun: would the building benefit from an awning to keep out direct sunlight and provide shelter? Would vestibules and ventilation be needed to help regulate the temperature and humidity inside the shop?

v. Consider also the topography and slopes of the external environment: are some locations suitable for an entrance with fewer steps or a shallower ramp? Where does rainwater runoff go from the buildings and on the street?

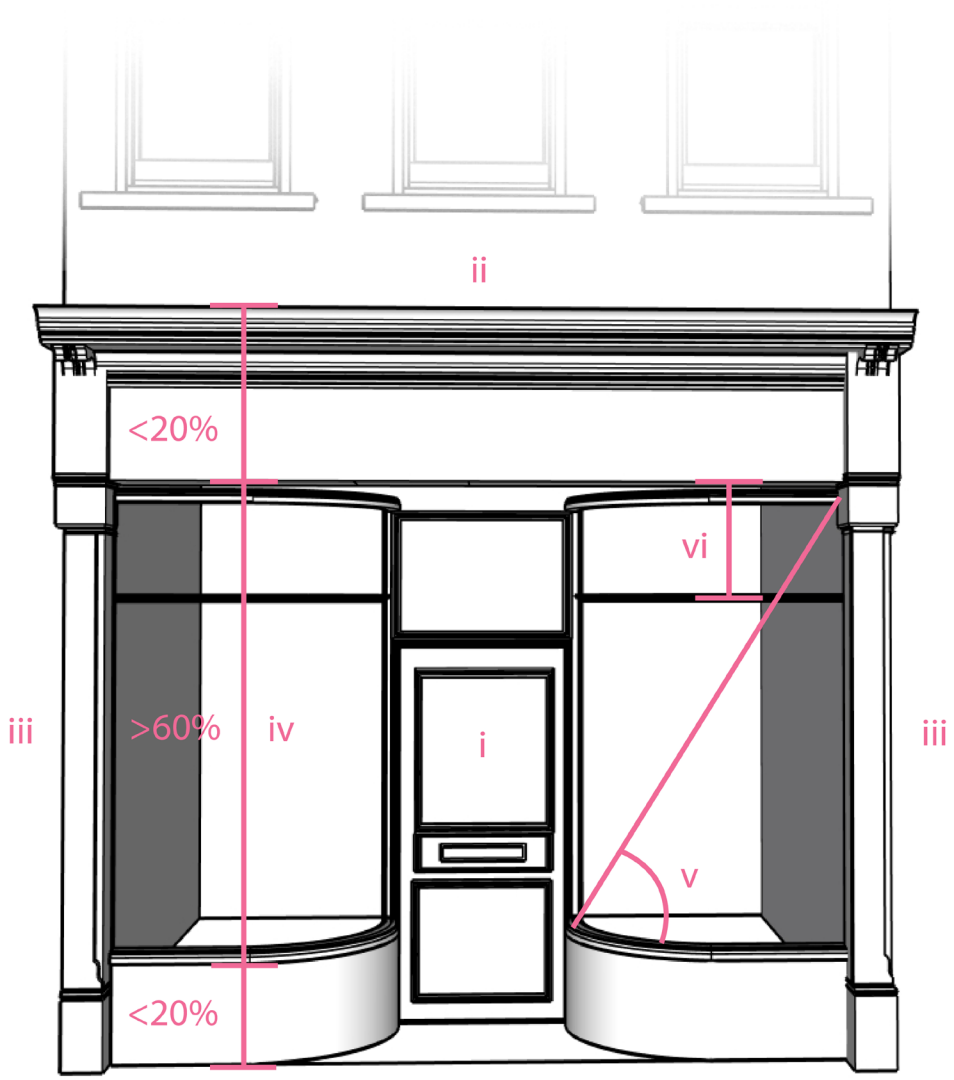
vi. The locations of utilities, such as gas and water, into the building may also be a constraint that should be understood.

This parade of shops in Grange-over-Sands has a fairly uniform design to the upper floors, but a range of shopfront layouts, styles at ground floor, ranging in age from Victorian to mid-20th century. An understanding of the site and its context will help determine the relative significance of the shopfronts, whether a new shopfront should be made to match the older examples or whether variety in shopfront design is part of the terrace's heritage value.

This building in Barrow is Victorian, but appears to have been given an update in the 1920s or 30s to give it a clean, modern appearance. This has added another layer to the building's character and appearance. A decision would need to be made as to what degree the 1920s or 30s alterations add to the building's significance.

Both the shopfront and the architecture of the upper floors wrap around the corner in exactly the same manner. The large pilasters of the shopfront also line up with brick pilasters to the upper storeys and decorative stonework at roof level. This suggests the shopfronts and upper storeys were designed as one and are original.

A contemporary shopfront with a glazed doorway and floor-to-ceiling windows has been successfully integrated with the traditional-style stonework of this modern retail building in Penrith. The clean lines and vertical emphasis of the windows either side of the columns form a simple symmetrical design which sits comfortably within the stone framed arcade while providing maximum visibility of the interior.



3.3

a. Format and proportions for existing and new shopfronts

i. The shopfront, signage and principal entrance must all be on the same elevation.

ii. There must be a clear upper edge of the shopfront that projects outwards and shelters the signage and openings below.

iii. There must be features that provide definitive left- and right-hand edges to the shopfront that define its extent. These features can be pilasters and/or returning the ends of the shopfront into the wall.

iv. Measuring the height of the shopfront from the pavement level outside to the top edge of the shopfront:

1. The area above the shop window frame up to the top of the shopfront that includes the fascia sign should be no more than 20% of the total height of the shopfront.

2. The shop windows must be at least 60% of the total height of the shopfront.
3. The stallriser (the area between the shop windowsill and pavement) must be no more than 20% of the total height of the shopfront.

v. Each principal shop windowpane must be at least 30% taller than it is wide to give vertical proportions. Therefore, broad expanses of glass will be divided up by vertical mullions (vertical divides, see example below).

vi. Where smaller lights are incorporated above the principal shop windowpanes, the height of this upper glazing should be 10 to 20% of the height of the principal windowpane below.

3.4 In most cases, glazing bars and mullions and frames to shopfronts should be slender and graceful in their shapes and proportions rather than basic or chunky. This is not shown in the illustration above.

3.5 Where awnings or shutters are proposed the design must specify the make and model and incorporate the specific dimensions of these in the overall shopfront design. Awnings must leave at least 2.4m clearance below the lowest edge of the awning. This is not shown in the illustration above.

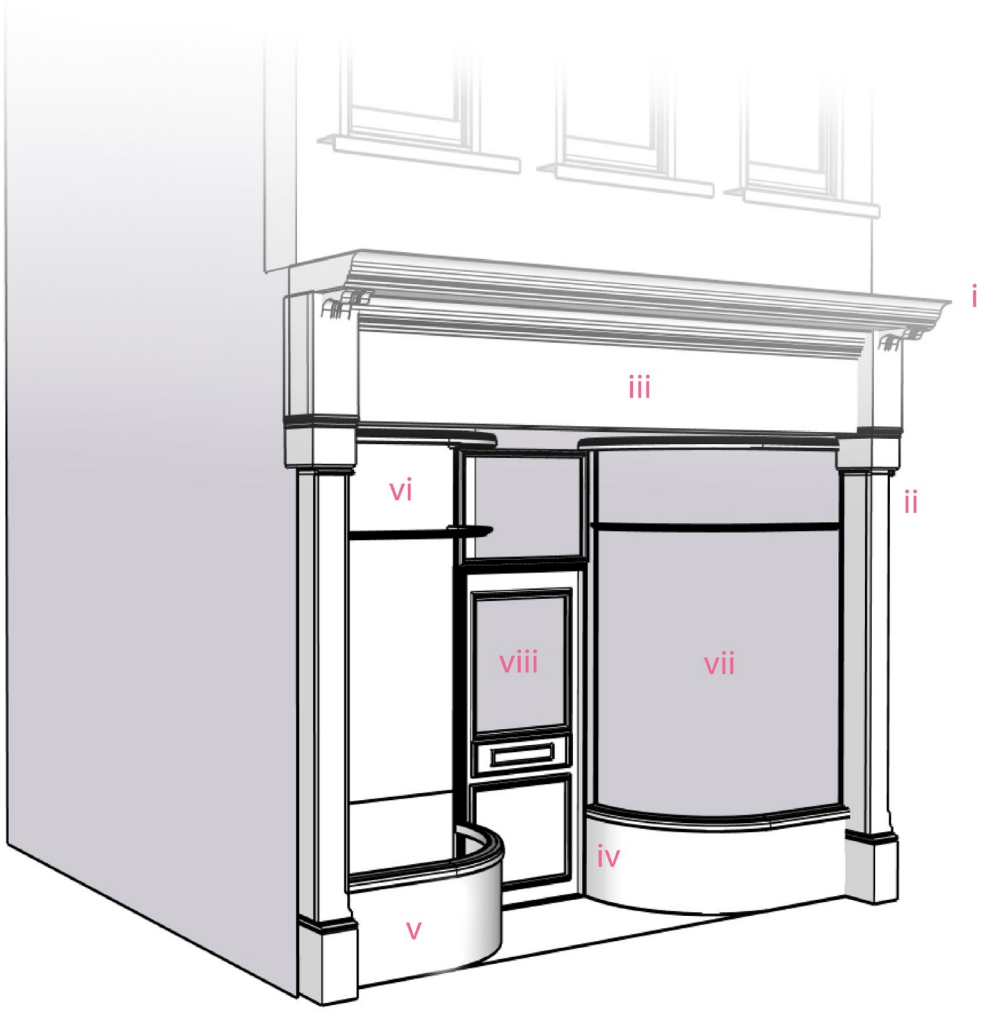
This shop window in Alston has many of the typical features that make up a shopfront but in miniature: mullions dividing the expanse of glass, a cornice along the top, strong right and left edges via the pilasters and brackets, a clear space for the signage, a chunky sill and a recessed yet gracefully shaped window frames with vertical proportions.

This corner shop in Kendal has all of the typical features of a shopfront. The strong edges made by the pilasters, curved consoles and cornice provide a robust frame for the window, door, stallriser, awning and signage.

The buildings and shopfronts along this street in Kendal are all different, but the shopfront heights and scales, the vertical proportions of the shop windows and the horizontal banding formed by the signage, cornices, sills and stallrisers provide consistency.

This post office in Kirkby Lonsdale has an internal floor that is quite high up from the street. As a response, the shopfront is set into the wall rather than running all the way down to the pavement. This helps to keep traditional proportions between the window and the rest of the shopfront. There is also a pleasing range of projecting and recessed features.

A simple but well-proportioned shopfront on a side street in Penrith town centre. It appears to be a late Georgian building and shopfront, but the white frames and door are perhaps from the mid-20th century. A shopfront can be attractive without being intricate or grand. The proportions and projections and recesses are what brings it to life.



a. Depth and shadow

Looking at the shopfront from the pavement, the feature that should be projecting the furthest out is:

i. The cornice or overall 'roof' of the shopfront. This will shelter and throw rainwater away from every part of the shopfront below.

ii. The pilasters or right and left-hand edge features, then

iii. The fascia sign and any boxes to house awnings or shutters, then

iv. The shop windowsill(s), then

v. The face of the stallriser, then

vi. The window frames of the shopfront, then

vii. The windowpanes of the shopfront, then

viii. The door.

Two neighbouring shops in Dalton that each show how important projecting and recessed features are. Both of these shopfronts follow the sequence set out in D. Depth and Shadow, above. The main difference is the left-hand shop does it in a much more pronounced and bold manner than the shopfront on the right.

This shopfront in Kendal also follows the pattern set out in D. Depth and Shadow, above. The door is set furthest back, the cornice furthest out. Even though the windows are slightly bowed they are still set back behind the pilasters to either side and the architrave above.

Two shopfronts in Kirkby Lonsdale. Different heights and slightly different proportions and details, but the components used and the depth and shadow they create are the same.

At this modern building in Penrith, the shopfront has a range of projecting and recessed features giving it depth and shadow. The corner doorway is set back from the building line, creating a sheltered and recessed entrance to the business.

b. Signage

i. Signage must not be on elevations other than the shopfront elevation.

ii. Signage must not be higher up the building than the shopfront. Hanging signs may be suitable at first floor level depending on the site and its context.

iii. The design of the shopfront must provide clear upper and lower limits to the size of signs. This can be achieved through projections such as a cornice and architrave or by having a fascia panel with defined edges.

iv. The shopfront must not extend higher than the underside of the windowsills of the storey above, or, if in a single storey building, it must sit below the eaves or parapet or eaves level.

v. Findings from the context analysis must be used when choosing appropriate building materials for the fascia as well as the size and colours used for lettering. Muted or subtle tones rather than bright colours should be encouraged especially where these may affect heritage assets.

vi. Lettering on fascia should be clear by being of a sufficient size, but leaving sufficient ‘breathing space’ around the edges of the fascia, so that lettering does not appear crowded or out of scale with the fascia.

These newer fascia signs and hanging sign are in proportion with the rest of this shopfront in Ulverston. Having two separate fascia signs is also far less intrusive than having one large fascia spanning both shopfronts. These shopfronts also make excellent use of the window glass for extra signage.

c. Security

Shopfront security measures should be designed to retain views into the shop when closed through:

i. Robust locks.

ii. Toughened glass.

iii. Reinforced stallrisers.

iv. Grilles or shutters that can be removed and stored during business hours.

v. Internal grilles or roller shutters rather than external shutters, which often harm the appearance of the building and street. Internal shutters should permit visibility into the shop, for example open lath shutters, latticed shutters or shutters with clear polycarbonate sections.

vi. Painted/coated roller shutters rather than bare metal ones.

vii. External roller shutters in those locations where appropriate and where the shutter housing and runners are concealed from view and the shutters themselves mean it is possible to still see into the shop.

d. Lighting

i. Illuminated shop window displays lit from inside the shop bring life to the street and help it feel more secure.

ii. External illumination should be used and directed sparingly to avoid or limit light pollution and nuisance. Downlighters are the most acceptable form of light fitting for these reasons.

iii. Discrete light fittings such as small LED fittings that can tuck underneath shopfront details (like cornices) or features (like doorway recesses or awnings) are preferred over prominent or ‘heritage’ lighting that can clutter the elevation and make it look untidy.

e. Shopfront colours

i. Colours should be applied to the joinery and features of the shopfront itself, and not to surrounding brickwork, stonework or render, to avoid the shopfront dominating the building;

ii. Vivid, garish or highly contrasting colour schemes should be avoided in order to respect amenity and to avoid the shopfront dominating the building, terrace, or parade;

iii. The co-ordinated, coherent use of two or three shopfront colours is supported provided the rest of the guidance is taken into account

iv. Corporate colour schemes should be altered or muted to suit certain locations like conservation areas or ‘gateway’ locations or other locations where amenity and townscape are of particular importance.

Here in Penrith, two colours are used for the shopfront plus a third for the signage. The signage itself is well-spaced, making full use of the fascia width, with ‘breathing space’ between the lettering, logo and edge of the sign.

Identity: what we don’t want to see

- Shopfront designs that ignore the findings of the site, context, and heritage assessments.
- Shopfronts that are poorly related to the rest of the building or wider parade or street.
- The replacement of shopfronts of architectural or historic value or are of local or national interest.
- Shopfronts where windows, doorways, signage, stallrisers or pilasters have awkward or clumsy proportions or dimensions.
- Shopfronts that are dominated by out of scale or out of proportion signage.
- Shopfronts with a very ‘flat’ looking frontage because doors and glazing are not recessed and feature like the cornice, sills and pilaster do not project forward.
- Designs where security, climate response and lighting are not integral part of the design but are ‘tacked on’ or afterthoughts.
- Inactive frontages created by solid roller shutters.
- Overly illuminated shopfronts that detract from the wider character of the street, cause light pollution or nuisance.

Light Pollution

CODE SF 3.2 Light Pollution: Lighting in streets, the public realm and buildings must preserve dark skies and minimise or avoid light pollution.

(Barrow: C7, DS5, I4, *DS2, HC5*; Eden: DEV5, ENV3, ENV9; South Lakeland: DM1, *DM2; Good Lighting Technical Advice Note*)

3.6 According to the CPRE Night Blight 2026, Westmorland & Furness has very high coverage of the darkest skies in the UK. Lighting designs should respect Dark Sky guidelines to minimise light pollution. A range of lighting options, including ground-focused downlighting and dotted lighting, can improve safety and add visual appeal while being environmentally friendly by minimising light spill and reducing light pollution.

3.7 Compliance with both local and national regulations is essential, as is consideration of the Dark Skies initiative to reduce light pollution. Proposals should be informed by the useful best practice advice and detailed technical guidance within the Good Lighting Technical Advice Note: Designing Out Light Pollution in Cumbria, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Arnside and Silverdale AONB.

3.8 The design of both internal and external lighting must have no or low impact on bats and nocturnal wildlife in accordance with the Institution of Lighting Professionals guidance GN08 Bats and Artificial Lighting.

Lighting: what we don't want to see

- Light pollution that is either a nuisance to others or undermines the district's dark skies.
- Lighting columns that are angled upwards with unnecessary high number of powerful luminaries.
- All signage illuminated.
- Uplighting that spills light.
- Artificial lighting directed at waterbodies, hedgerows, woodland or lines of trees.
- Proposal matching or similar to the bad practice examples in the Good Lighting Technical Advice Note: Designing Out Light Pollution in Cumbria, the Yorkshire Dales National Park and the Arnside and Silverdale AONB

Accessibility

CODE SF 3.3 Accessibility: New and replacement shopfronts must incorporate reasonable adjustments to support equality of access by all potential visitors to the building.

(Barrow: DS5, *BP2, HC4;* Eden: DEV5; South Lakeland: *DM2;* Equality Act 2010)

3.9 Shopfronts whether new, replacement or adapted, should be designed to accommodate the needs of all visitors, particularly the elderly and those with disabilities.

3.10 This design code is focussed on the physical and sensory access into shops. In this context reasonable adjustments may include any or all of:

- Providing suitable steps or ramped access with handrails or handles between the pavement level and shop floor level. This includes temporary ramps that staff are trained to set up and disassemble.
- Providing suitably wide shop doorways or doors that have an adjustable width via additional leaves.
- Having doorbells and/or other means of staff being alerted to people arriving who cannot enter the building without assistance.
- Having well signed alternative level access into the building.
- Ensuring that heavy doors open automatically or can be opened by staff.
- Having a suitable level of illumination and colour contrasts between different surfaces and the edges of steps.

3.11 With all of the above, it is better that these measures are integral parts of the shopfront design rather than a limited and compromised retrofit or physically or visually cluttering the shopfront.

Levelled steps, handrails, a propped open door, and push bell at wheelchair user height are all examples of reasonable adjustments being made to address the floor level change and a heavy door. Appleby.

Levelled steps, contrasting step edges and a handrail are all reasonable adjustments to this late Georgian shopfront in Kendal.

This small village shop in Armathwaite opens directly into the road, which gives little space for improving physical accessibility. Even so, the shallow steps, propped door and grab handles are helpful measures.

Accessibility: what we don't want to see

- Shopfront designs that do not consider the access needs of all of their users and potential users to a reasonable extent.