

Conwy Local Development Plan 2007 – 2022



SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

LDP36: Shop front design

Adopted March 2017

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If you would like an extract or summary of this document on cassette, in large type, in Braille or any other format, please call the Strategic Planning Policy Service on (01492) 575461.

Statement of Consultation

This Supplementary Planning Guidance document was issued for a period of six weeks public consultation between 5 September 2016 and 14 October 2016.

It was adopted by Cabinet on 14 March 2017.

Copies of the representations received, together with the Council's response are available to view on-line at <http://conwy.jdi-consult.net/ldp/>

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

- 1.1.1 This is one of a series of Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents that give further advice on policies contained in the Conwy Local Development Plan (LDP). SPGs are intended to advise planning applicants and will be taken into account when determining planning applications. The purpose of this SPG is to provide planning guidance on policy CFS/7 Shop Front Design.
- 1.1.2 The LDP attaches considerable importance to suitably designed shop fronts as they are critical in forming the character and appearance of shopping frontages in the settlements in which they are situated. This SPG looks at the design of shop fronts in general (acceptable security measures are dealt with via LDP policy CFS/8 – Shopping Street Frontage Security and LDP 03 – Shop Front Security SPG).

2 Policy context

2.1 National policy

- 2.1.1 Chapter 10 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) outlines the Welsh Government's objectives for retailing and town centres. One of these objectives is directly linked to the impact shopfronts can have on the success of retail centres and this is to; 'enhance the vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres;'
- 2.1.2 National Planning Policy also includes general guidance on design. Please see Technical Advice Note 12 – Design (www.gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/tans)
- 2.1.3 A significant number of shops are located within town centres that are designated Conservation Areas and or listed buildings. In such cases national planning policy on conservation will also apply and appropriate consents will need to be sought. Please see section 7 for further information.

2.2 Local Development Plan

Policy CFS/3 Shop Front Design

The Council will only grant planning permission to proposals for new shop fronts or alterations to existing shop fronts where they are in keeping with the building and its surroundings.

3 Principles of good shop front design

- 3.1 First and foremost, the retention of existing shopfronts or partial retention should be considered where it is of architectural merit or historical interest and currently benefits or has the potential via refurbishment to benefit the streetscene. For advice on retaining original existing shopfronts please contact the Council's Conservation Officer (contact details at section 9).
- 3.2 The starting point when considering a new or replacement shop front should always be an assessment of the whole building and adjacent properties, including any nearby traditional shop fronts to assess existing character.

- 3.3 Shop fronts for many people are the most noticeable feature of a streetscene. By creating a good first impression, a well designed shop front can entice shoppers to enter and are therefore important in creating and maintaining a successful business. It is therefore vitally important that they are of good proportions, details and materials.
- 3.4 Shop front design is based on a set of principles which achieved a satisfactory relationship between the shop front and the building as a whole. Important elements are identified in section 3.2.
- The style of the shop front should harmonise with the age, character and proportion of the building as a whole.
 - Any concealed original features such as pilasters and fascias should be exposed and restored in order to enhance the appearance of the shop front.
 - Replacement shop front's should respect the period and style of the building in terms of proportion and quality of materials and relate well to neighbouring properties.
 - Where adjacent shop fronts are to be operated as a single concern then each shop front should be individually expressed by retaining or reintroducing pilasters between them.
 - The pilaster, stallriser, cornice and fascia combine to enclose the shop window and the entrance door within a frame constructed to proportions which support the building facade above. The main elements are in proportion to each other; the height of the stallriser should not normally exceed 20% of the overall shop front height, nor should the height of the entablature.
 - Doorways and entrances should be accessible to people with disabilities.
- 3.5 These basic principles applied to traditional or contemporary shop fronts should result in an elevation which is visually pleasing.

Shop front design elements





Blind Box

Fanlight

Transom

Panelled Pilaster

Examples of Shop Front Styles





3.1 Fascia

3.1.1 The fascia was traditionally an angled board containing the trade name or other signs sited between the corbels at the top of the pilasters. The fascia is an area where there is opportunity to create a distinctive and individual style. By applying the following principles a high quality commercial street scene can result:

- Cornices should be retained or reinstated as the terminating element of the fascia; they should be weatherproofed using lead flashing or a similar material.
- The width of the fascia should be restricted within the pilasters and corbels, or line up with the window frame below where the corbels are missing.
- The depth of the fascia should be restricted to the depth of the console. If consoles do not exist the general rule is that the fascia depth should not exceed one-fifth of the distance between the cornice and pavement.
- The fascias of adjacent properties should be used as a guide for alignment but not necessarily as a standard.
- Over deep fascias should be reduced when a shop front is replaced.
- The fascia should contain the name and/or trade of the premises together with the street number of the premises and a telephone number if necessary.
- The colour scheme should complement the shop window frames. The lettering style should be simple and bold.
- **Shiny, glossy, highly reflective and luminous colours and materials are not appropriate.**

3.2 Stallriser

3.2.1 Stallrisers are the solid panels below the shop window they can introduce a horizontal unity in the streetscene. They can also provide a visual base to the shop front, bring displays of goods closer to the shopper and protect the glazing from damage.

- The materials for stallrisers, plinths and upstands should respect the main building and shop front. Appropriate materials include:- timber, stonework, brickwork to match the upper facades, painted smooth render, slate, quarry, matt finish tiles, or good quality terracotta, faience or ceramics.
- Traditionally stallrisers were normally required in all shop premises. The base of the pilasters or existing traditional stallrisers in adjacent units should determine the height.
- The general design and details of mouldings and cills should respect the architectural period of the property.
- A solid upstand is recommended.

3.3 Pilasters

3.3.1 Pilasters contribute to the vertical emphasis of a building and provide support for the shop and upper floors. The pilaster should project only slightly from the wall, and have a base, a shaft and a capital.

- Pilasters should be modelled and project beyond the plane of the shop front and the upper floors.

- They should not be clad, treated separately on each side of the party line, or cluttered with fixtures such as signs, alarm boxes or blind fittings.
- In historic buildings pilasters should be treated in a manner sympathetic to the architectural style of the building.
- In historic buildings decorative mouldings should be copied from an original nearby shop or a historical pattern book.

3.4 Window frames and doors

3.4.1 Windows and doors, through the use of colour, interesting shapes and proportions, quality materials and lively window displays can add visual interest to the streetscene, produce a distinctive individual shop unit, should improve the value of the property and help improve business turnover.

- The detailed design of the size, shape and profile of window frames, glazing bars and doors should respect the architectural style and period of the premises.
- The plane of shop windows should be slightly recessed from the pilasters.
- A variation in the plane, by recessing doors or curving windows, can add to visual interest. Deeply recessed windows or completely open frontages are inappropriate in visual and functional terms.
- In historic buildings a traditional height stallriser should be part of the design with windows opening above this height only.
- Large areas of glazing should incorporate visual manifestation, (alerting people who are visually impaired to the presence of the glass) at least 150mm high, across the width of the glazed area, at two heights: 850-1000mm and 1400-1600mm above ground level, to ensure visibility against the background seen through the glass.
- Glazing should always be transparent, even in non-retail units. Opaque, frosted, reflective, mirrored or tinted glass is normally inappropriate, unless it has a functional use in small, selective areas.
- Shatterproof safety glass (laminated glass) should be used to ensure public safety and as a security measure.

3.5 Capitals, consoles and corbels

3.5.1 These crown the pilasters and define the width of the fascia. They are a key element in maintaining the predominant vertical rhythm of a traditional streetscape.

3.6 Materials

3.6.1 Examples of a diverse range of materials used in traditional shop fronts include Portland Stone, marble, granite, terra-cotta, bronze framing, painted timber framing, plate or curved glass and cast iron grilles. Timber was the standard shop front material, it can be worked to any profile, it is durable and can be repainted at minimum cost if one wants to change or freshen up its appearance. The use of traditional materials such as painted timber is encouraged wherever appropriate, with a focus on durability to extend the lifespan of the shopfront. The use of acrylic sheeting, Perspex, plastic, standard natural finish aluminium and unpainted softwoods should be avoided. Colours should be traditional and appropriate to the building and streetscene. Garish or lurid colours should be avoided.

4.7 Access

- 4.7.1 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires that businesses providing everyday services make reasonable adjustments to enable access for people with disabilities. Some adjustments for example, access ramps will have an impact upon the appearance of shopfronts. It is therefore important in the context of LDP policy and guidance that such alterations are made sympathetically with due consideration for the impact of the building in question and wider streetscene. Some examples of where sympathetic alterations have been made can be seen with Cadw's guidance – Overcoming Barriers:

http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/Overcoming_the_Barriers_EN.pdf

4 Shop front blinds and canopies

- 4.1 The main purpose of a blind or canopy is to protect shop goods from damage caused by sunlight. Where existing traditional glazed or retractable horizontal fabric blinds exist, or if there is historic evidence of canopies to your property would we encourage their retention, repair or reinstatement.
- 4.2 Planning permission (and listed building consent where the building is statutorily listed) will be required to install a shop blind or canopy. Approval will not be given for unsympathetic additions to attractive shop fronts, and enforcement action could be taken to remove unauthorised canopies or awnings.
- 4.3 Where used, blinds should always be retractable so that the fascia is not permanently obscured. Traditionally shop blinds were made of canvas with the blind box incorporated into the fascia cornice. Blinds will not be permitted above the ground floor level.

A fixed glazed canopy projecting over the public highway will normally need a maximum vertical clearance of 2.6 metres, measured from the surface of the highway to the underside of the canopy. A folding canopy or blind will normally require a minimum vertical clearance of 2.1 metres. A minimum horizontal clearance of 0.9 metres will normally be required from the edge of the carriageway to the canopy.

Examples of inappropriate blinds (Historic Photos)



- 4.4 Within Conservation Areas or on historic buildings, Dutch or balloon canopies or any form of plastic canopy will not be permitted. This is because they are usually erected as a means of increasing advertising space and tend to introduce an over-dominant element, which can obscure the fascia. Balloon and plastic canopies tend to be out of character with the streetscape.
- 4.5 Materials that are glossy, wet look, reflective, stretch fabrics and using fluorescent colours are not normally appropriate within Conservation Areas or on historic buildings.

Traditional **two colour fabric blind** or similar can be particularly suitable for traditional small scale shop fronts, provided they are well designed and purpose made to fit neatly above the shop window. When in place, they still allow a good view of the display inside the shop and offer a welcoming atmosphere to the passing shopper. Blinds can be retracted completely and stored when the shop is open on darker days.

Examples of appropriate blinds



- 4.6 Traditional **glazed canopies** should be repaired where existing canopies remain and new glazed canopies should be well designed, based on historic evidence and purpose made to fit neatly within the shop frontage with clean termination lines denoting change of occupancy.
- 4.7 New glazed canopy structures, or overhangs, should be a minimum of 450mm from the carriageway edge (otherwise delivery vans are more likely to hit them) and a clear 2m wide footway behind. The footway would remain adopted and a licence under the Highways Act will be required by the occupier of the property to construct the canopy.

Canopies should typically incorporate decorative wrought iron or glazed down stands supported on decorative brackets secured to cast iron columns to suit the character of the shop front or adjacent existing canopies.

Examples of appropriate canopies



5 Shop signage

- 5.1 In legal phraseology, advertisement means any word, letter, model, sign, placard, notice or representation, whether illuminated or not, in the nature of, and employed wholly or partly for the purposes of advertisement, announcement or direction and includes any hoarding or similar structure used or adapted to display adverts. An advert with a light directed on it counts as illuminated, as well as those internally illuminated.
- 5.2 The advice given intends to show good design practice for new signage and appropriate reinstatement within and around conservation areas and on historic buildings.

5.3 Advertisement consent

- 5.3.1 Adverts may need Advertisement Consent; to install new advertising or even to renew that existing. In addition you may need consent where illumination is introduced. Applicants should contact the Development Management Team for further advice.
- 5.3.2 Unsympathetic advertisements on shop fronts applications will not be supported. Enforcement action could be taken to prosecute for the offence and to effect removal of unauthorised signage.

Illuminated Signs

- 5.3.1 Internally illuminated box fascia signs can indeed brighten up a dull shopping centre, however more and more box signs that are being installed are not following the lines of the original fascia and sometimes destroy details such as corbels or cornices surrounding the shop front in their installation where overly large.
- 5.3.2 Carefully and imaginatively designed individual illuminated or halo lit letters are more acceptable than an evenly illuminated box, with little chance of glare. The council will take account of the proposed brightness when considering illuminated adverts and will refuse permission for any advert which appears too bright.
- 5.3.3 Within Conservation Areas or on historic buildings, illuminated box signs or any form of vinyl / acrylic signs will not be permitted. This is because they become over-dominant elements, which can obscure the fascia and cover important features on the shop front.

Examples of unacceptable or discouraged signage style



Examples of acceptable signage styles



5.4 Projecting Signs

- 5.4.1 The preferred type of projecting sign is the traditional hanging signboard. If it has to be illuminated this should be by means of lighting troughs located at the top of the board or by small spotlights mounted on the supporting bracket. There are many inappropriate internally illuminated projecting box signs at present in Conservation Areas, but hanging signs are considered more appropriate where the shop front is of a traditional character and hence will be promoted.
- 5.4.2 If box signs are considered acceptable the maximum overall projection permitted from the face of the building is 700mm, whereas there may be more leeway in the overall size and projection of a non-illuminated traditional hanging sign.
- 5.4.3 The use of projecting signs traditionally displayed by certain businesses such as a chemist's mortar and pestle will be encouraged. Such signs can add interest and variety to the streetscene.

Examples of unacceptable projecting signage



Examples of acceptable hanging / projecting signage



5.5 Canopy Signage

- 6.6.1 Within Conservation Areas or on historic buildings, Dutch or balloon canopies or any form of plastic canopy will not be supported. This is because they are usually erected as a means of increasing advertising space and are not generally a traditional feature. However the reintroduction of glazed canopies will be favourably looked upon, although care should be taken not to incorporate the business's name (due to transitory nature of shop occupants.)

5.6 Welsh Language Signage

- 6.7.1 The Council encourages the use of bilingual signs where possible. A community translation service operates at Menter Iaith, Llanrwst. Please email post@cyfieithucymunedol.org for further information (charges for translation may apply).

5.7 Other Signs

Generally, no advertisements will be appropriate on the upper storeys of buildings other than the names of businesses located on upper floors which may be displayed on their windows by means of black or gold lettering applied directly to the glass known as reverse lettering. There is also precedent for intricate mosaic signage within recessed shop fronts, and this should be considered

Examples of appropriate canopy signage



Examples of appropriate lettering



6 Other relevant policies

6.1 Development principles

6.1.1 LDP policy DP/3 promotes design quality and seeks to reduce crime. Policy DP/4 details development criteria. Both these policies may be relevant.

6.2 Change of use and shop front security

6.2.1 LDP policies CFS/3 Primary Shopping Areas and CFS/4 Shopping Zones are relevant to any proposals for a change of use from A1 in the designated shopping areas. SPG LDP23 Change of use within town and neighbourhood centres accompanies these policies.

6.2.2 LDP policy CFS/8 Shopping Street Frontage Security, and the SPG LDP3 Shop front Security are particularly important considerations and should be taken into account when planning changes to shop fronts.

6.2.3 Copies of the above mentioned SPG are available here: www.conwy.gov.uk/ldp/spg

6.3 Cultural heritage

6.3.1 LDP policies CTH/1 and CTH/2 are relevant. These policies seek to preserve and/or where necessary enhance the heritage assets within the County Borough, for example Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas or Buildings or Structures of Local Importance. A significant number of shops are situated within Conservation Areas and it is therefore important to recognise the impact that shop frontages have on such heritage designations.

It is intended that the advice contained within this SPG will be read alongside the appropriate Conservation Area Management Plan or Appraisal where these are available. Please see www.conwy.gov.uk/ldp/spg The Historic Environment Records for Conwy are also a useful source of information and should be checked for information regarding historic buildings.

7 Submitting a planning application

7.1 Enquiries and pre-application discussions

7.1.1 Planning application and pre-application enquiry forms, along with guidance notes, are available from the Council's Planning offices, or to download from the Council's website: www.conwy.gov.uk/planning

7.1.2 Planning applications can be submitted either in hard copy format or electronically via the Planning Portal www.planningportal.gov.uk

7.2 Conservation areas and listed buildings

7.2.1 Conservation Area Consent may be needed if substantial or total demolition of a building or structure is involved and Listed Building Consent will be required should there be any structural change to the building or material change to the appearance of a listed building. The process is similar to the planning application process and once it has been established that Conservation Area Consent or Listed Building Consent is required then the two applications should be submitted at the same time either in hard copy format or electronically via the planning portal www.planningportal.gov.uk. Relevant application forms and guidance notes are available from the Council.

8 Contacts

Strategic Planning Policy Service	2 nd Floor Llandudno Library Building Mostyn Street Llandudno LL30 2RP	Phone: 01492 575461 Email: cdll.ldp@conwy.gov.uk
Development Management Section (including Conservation)	Civic Offices, Colwyn Bay, Conwy LL29 8AR	Phone: 01492 575247 Email: regulatory.services@conwy.gov.uk
Environmental Health	Civic Offices, Colwyn Bay, Conwy LL29 8AR	Phone: 01492 575283 Email: regulatory.services@conwy.gov.uk
Highways (Environment, Roads & Facilities Service)	Mochdre Offices, Conway Road, Mochdre, Colwyn Bay, LL28 5AB	Phone: 01492 575337 Email: erf@conwy.gov.uk
Building Control	Civic Offices, Colwyn Bay, LL29 8AR	Phone: (01492) 574172 E-mail: regulatory.services@conwy.gov.uk