

Shopfronts and Security

Planning Guidance - November 2019



SHOPFRONTS AND SECURITY

The purpose of this advice note is to provide guidance on works to shopfronts and to help you apply for the necessary consents where required. It sets out the Council's aims in relation to historic shopfronts, suitable security measures and the design of new or altered shopfronts. The document sets out the permissions which may be required and design guidelines considered important by the Council in achieving a good design which is sympathetic to the whole building and its neighbours, including advertisements, security, access etc.

It is not intended to be a 'blueprint' for shopfront design, but sets out an approach which should help to protect remaining historic shopfronts and ensure that new and altered shopfronts relate to the whole building and the streetscape in general. The Council accepts that there may be occasional proposals of exceptional design and originality which diverge from these guidelines but which may also be acceptable.

SHOPFRONTS

Shopfronts vary across the region. They not only have an important impact on the appearance of buildings and streets but contribute to local identity and the vitality and interest of a place as a significant visitor attraction. Good traditional shop fronts, which are often quite simple in design, should be retained. Some shops simply have enlarged window openings, emphasised by stone surrounds and masonry up to sill height. Higher sills result in a reduced area of glazing. The simpler, traditional shopfronts can be emphasised to good effect by careful use of colour and signage. In most cases the shopfront which was original to the building should be the basis for the design of a new shop front.

There are a number of historic shopfronts across the region where there are large plate glass panes, curved glass panes, bow fronted windows or multi-paned windows. Others may have etched glass from historic occupants. The glazing itself can be unique and of historic interest and every effort should be made to preserve it.

There are also a small number of first floor shop windows which show the history of the use of a building.

Planning permission is generally required for alterations to shopfronts whether the building is outside or within a Conservation Area. Listed Building Consent is required where the alterations affect the character of a Listed Building.

New shop fronts need to be individual but use proportions and design which complement the character of the whole building in which they are located, as well as those in similar buildings in the wider area. Although many traditional shop fronts are designed with a particular set of features, these vary in detail and as long as new shop fronts include the basic elements the detail can be simple.



A new shopfront can retain the architectural character and appearance of the building and make a positive contribution to the wider setting if basic principles are followed.

Relief and interest will be provided through the addition of a fascia and consoles which should

- be appropriately designed and proportioned
- provide a frame for the shop sign so that it may sit within the fascia
- respect the age and form of the whole building.

Two or more individual shop fronts may be required side by side in a wide building rather than a single continuous frontage.

The use of recessed doors is very often a traditional shopfront feature for both offset or central entrances. The position of doors and other elements should not be placed where they compete visually with the position of windows and other detail in the upper floors.

Where valued older shopfronts exist, the preferred option should be to retain and repair; unsound areas of timber sills, plinths, pilasters and consoles can be repaired to preserve historic detail. Where this is not possible the shopfront should be reinstated using traditional materials and detail.

Earlier shopfronts may be hidden beneath later additions and can be recovered and repaired or used as the basis for reinstatement. Where it is not possible to recover and reuse an old shopfront, the design may be used as evidence to help inform the proposed design of a new shopfront.

Original shopfronts may require architectural and archaeological recording before and during removal; survey drawings and photographs may be sufficient.

Most buildings, old and new, provide some type of framework into which a shopfront can be inserted. However, if the building was previously altered from a house, careful consideration should be given to how well the structure was supported in the past before designing a shopfront.



The shopfront itself, whether traditional or modern, usually consists of a number of components, all of which have aesthetic and functional values.

Timber is the most traditional material for shopfronts and remains the most versatile. It is naturally flexible, readily shaped and the surface gives texture; it can be repaired and painted over time. However, brass and other metals are also traditional particularly in the early 20th century and metal ventilators and grilles are common in shopfronts of timber construction. Modern metals such as aluminium may be an acceptable alternative if the sections and elements are appropriately shaped and proportioned. Where reproduction of an original shopfront is required, the use of aluminium or stainless

steel would not normally be acceptable. Powder-coated finishes in primary colours or white are not appropriate for door and window frames as this tends to give these elements undue prominence.

Where a new shopfront in a traditional style is being contemplated, it is essential that the details of the shopfront are based on historic examples.

An ongoing trend is that national companies want to make use of a 'corporate identity' in shopfront design and signage, often with no consideration for the character of the whole building or the wider streetscape. The use of inappropriate materials is often associated with corporate signage. Corporate colours and logos may be incorporated sensitively and appropriately using traditional, shopfront materials such as timber, glass and masonry.



On a shopfront where original pilasters, fascia and cornice survive, these elements should be retained. The cladding of pilasters that were originally intended to be the same masonry as that used in the rest of the building frontage, or a contrasting stone, alters the character of a building. Where shopfronts have been inappropriately altered, an application for a new shopfront or for significant alterations will be treated as an opportunity for restoring the frontage in accordance with the principles described in this guide.

Therefore where elements of an original traditional shopfront have been covered over or removed, they should generally be re-instated. This is particularly important where there are several shopfronts in one building and a continuous cornice and regular, uniform pilasters are part of the architectural composition of the elevation.

The following guidelines will help you:

- Design the shopfront by keeping the scale and proportion sympathetic to the building as a whole, its neighbours and the street.
- Choose materials which relate sympathetically with the external materials of the building as a whole - traditional materials are stone, timber and in some cases may include cast iron, bronze or ceramics. Avoid unnaturally smooth or glossy materials such as plastics, plastic coated timber or powder coated metals.
- Design the fascia as an integral part of the shopfront using traditional proportions. Look for evidence of original fascia depth either beneath the existing fascia or on neighbouring shops and reinstate this where possible. Where an existing fascia is excessively deep, consider replacing it – the original fascia may be behind. If it cannot be replaced, a secondary fascia

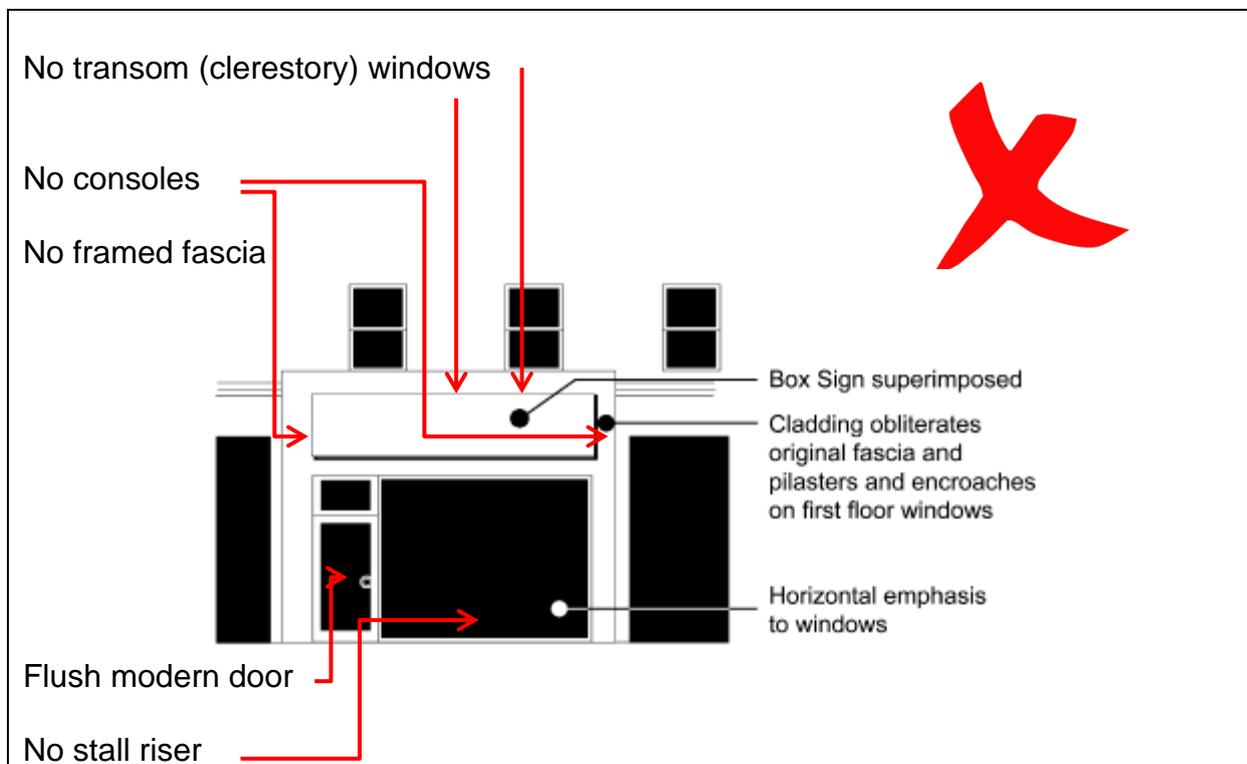
could be installed in proportion to the shopfront as long as the underlying fascia can be disguised.

- Ensure the fascia design includes a traditional frame into which a proposed sign may be set because a flush fascia with no frame or a box fascia will appear unsympathetic or very clumsy.
- Consider options for discrete external lighting in the new design Entrance and Display Area. This is contained within the framework of the pilasters, the fascia and the stall-riser.

In historic and traditional shopfronts, the thresholds and door reveals may use decorative wall or floor tiles sometimes using mosaics and incorporating trade names or scenes related to the former use of the shop. These are rare and should be retained as part of the historic interest of a building.

The following measures will reduce the horizontal emphasis of shopfronts and avoid excessive areas of plate glass:

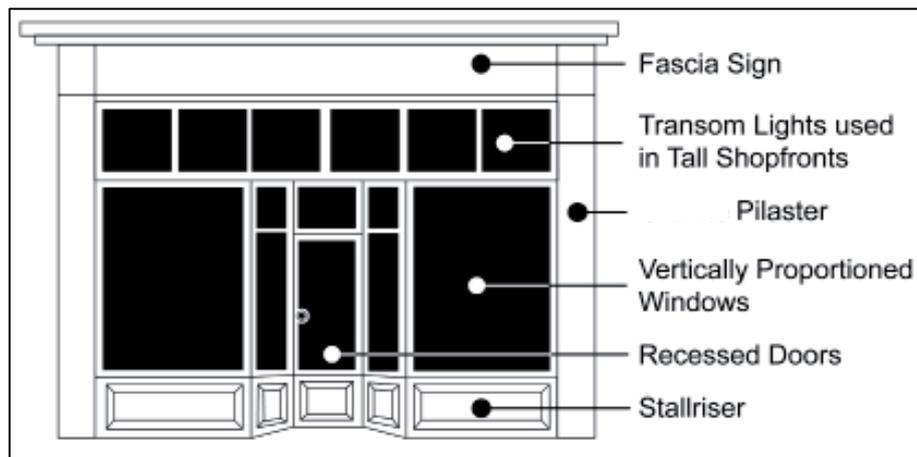
- subdivision of large windows with mullions
- provision of high level transom windows
- provision of stall risers at a proportionate height off the ground
- provision of a strong sill
- entrance must be easily distinguishable from adjoining windows- doors should be set back into the shop front
- fully glazed doors should be avoided



When designing or restoring shopfronts there should be a plan in respect of the use of the display space to advertise goods and offers available inside the shop without resorting to unsightly posters attached to the inside of the display window. It is important for natural surveillance and the vitality of the streets that people can see into the shop and the display space appears organised rather than dishevelled.

When designing new shop fronts, security requirements for the whole shop should be planned and incorporated. Reducing the area of glazing in the shop front by using traditional masonry stall risers and considering decorative means of protecting recessed doors should be sufficient for most businesses.

Terms



Pilasters: these vertically separate individual shop units, and normally relate to the width and design of the building above. They give each unit a separate identity and may highlight the doorway. They should be retained or incorporated as appropriate.

Cornice: this visually separates the ground floor shop from the floors above and emphasises the distinction between the uses within the building. The fascia and signs should therefore be set below the cornice. Where no cornice exists, it should normally be introduced at first floor level at the top of the fascia.

Stall-riser: this is the solid base of the shopfront, which 'anchors' the unit to the street and takes up any slope in the pavement across the building frontage. Functionally it protects the display windows against street level damage, and allows ventilation or access to basement and cellars. It is always preferred to full depth glazing. Stall risers vary in height but they should be at least 20% of the height of the shop window and taller if there is no clerestory window above the transom. Good examples of materials used to construct stall-risers in historic shopfronts include stone, timber, ceramic tiles, iron, and toughened glass and where these remain they should be kept.

Clerestory: also known as transom windows, are commonly included in late 19th and early 20th century shop fronts to give extra light and ventilation or to modify the proportion of the main shop windows. This area may be decorative or subdivided into many small windows. Ideally the clerestory window/s should take up a minimum of 20% of the top part of the shop window. It/they should not be covered by the fascia

or a sign as that would interfere with the overall proportions of the shopfront. In older buildings, suspended ceilings often hide original, ornate ceilings above the clerestory level. Exposure of original ceilings can add interest, space and character to a shop. Suspended ceilings which interfere with the external appearance of the clerestory should be avoided. If a suspended ceiling is required, only design options which minimise any impact on the external appearance of the shopfront will be considered positively.

Fascia: the street number and trade name of the shop are normally displayed on the fascia panel. The fascia is normally used to frame the shop sign and the size and scale of the fascia and associated lettering can have a considerable impact on the character and appearance of buildings and the street. The fascia can be sensitively lit using trough lighting.

ROLLER SHUTTERS

The purpose of this guidance is to guide shop owners and shopfitters towards effective security measures for individual premises which also respect the character of the existing building and the street scene. Dumfries and Galloway Council and its partners are committed to tackling crime, enhancing community safety and protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of shopping areas. Ill designed security measures work against the creation of vital, vibrant and attractive shopping environments and can be counter productive to the area's economic viability. Potential investors may be dissuaded from investing and shoppers may be reluctant to visit an environment which is, or appears to be, vulnerable to crime.

Planning permission is required for the installation of roller shutters and demountable grilles on shopfronts because the external appearance of a building is almost always materially affected.

Listed Building Consent is required because such proposals affect the character and original fabric of a building which is designated as being of special architectural or historic interest. This is the case irrespective of whether roller shutters are of a solid or open mesh type, are mounted externally or internally, or are erected to screen windows or doors.

Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note (PAN) 77 'Designing Safer Places' states that:

'Security shutters illustrate the tension that can exist between effective crime prevention and the need to maintain or improve the environmental quality of an area. The creation of a fortress like atmosphere by the use of shutters can be self-defeating because an area can be given a hostile and confrontational appearance, particularly as shutters are vulnerable to graffiti. This can discourage the public from using the area and the benefits of natural surveillance are lost. Where the need for the provision of shutters is identified, an appropriate balance between security and environmental quality should be sought.'

Historic Environment Scotland's advice *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Shopfronts and Signs* (2010) advise in relation to shopfront security that:

'Externally mounted modern roller shutters can be difficult to accommodate on a historic shopfront. Alternatives can include removable external grilles, toughened glass or security film. There are also measures that can be taken internally to improve the security of a shopfront. These can include internal grilles and shutters.'

Roller security shutters and grilles, particularly solid metal types, can be unsightly and damage the character and appearance of the street.

More stringent control is considered necessary within designated Conservation Areas and in relation to Listed Building. The Local Development Plan requires development proposals to preserve and enhance the character of these areas, and a greater degree of control over development exists here in comparison to other areas of Dumfries and Galloway. A general presumption against all externally mounted roller shutters would be more appropriate in designated Conservation Areas and for listed buildings, except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where the building does not contribute to the character of the area and roller shutters would not detrimentally affect that character. .

In considering the matter of security of shop premises, there shall be a district-wide presumption in favour of security measures that comprise the installation of

- toughened or laminated glass
- internally mounted open mesh demountable / collapsible grilles, or internally mounted roller shutters of a 'brick bond' type design
- externally mounted demountable grilles [not roller shutters]
- a combination of these

Internally mounted roller shutters should not:

- have box housings visible externally (i.e. which project below the fascia, or involve increasing the depth of the fascia, or the creation of a sub-fascia)
- interfere with internal features of interest, or, in the case of listed buildings, be of a solid type

Solid Roller Shutters

Shutters themselves are frequently unattractive. They usually take the form of a featureless solid blind of unpainted galvanised metal and can be an attraction to graffiti. They can create a blank, lifeless appearance at ground level and detract from the vitality of shopping areas outside shop opening hours. These shutters usually require a large box which is positioned above the shopfront to accommodate the shutter when the business is operational. The boxes themselves can detract from the appearance of the building and street scene with no attempt being made to disguise them. Particularly, in the case of traditional shopfronts, roller shutter boxes disfigure or destroy architectural features such as moulded fascia boards, cornices, pilasters or decorative clerestory windows.



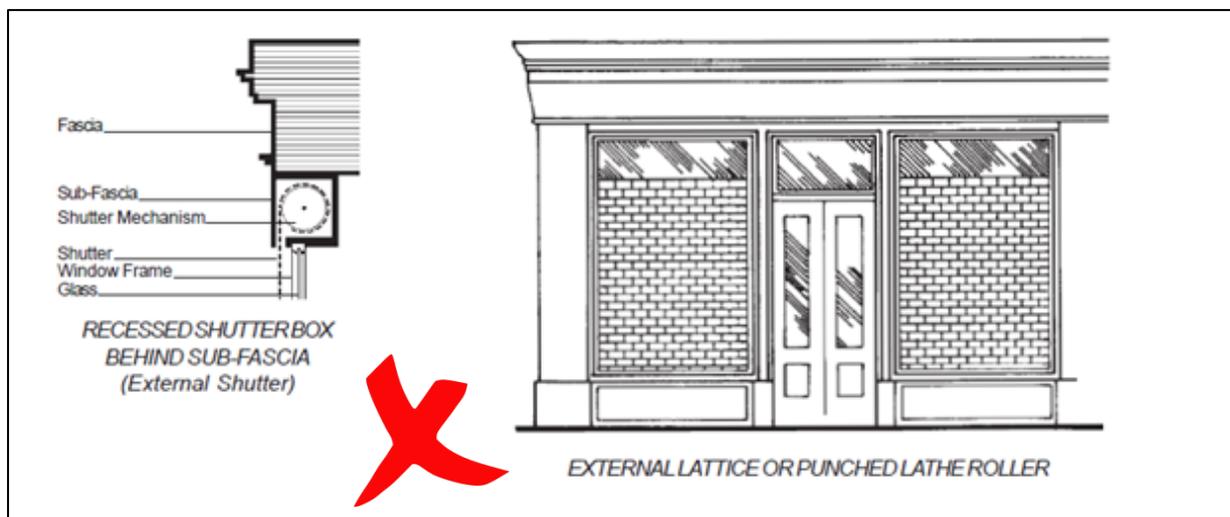
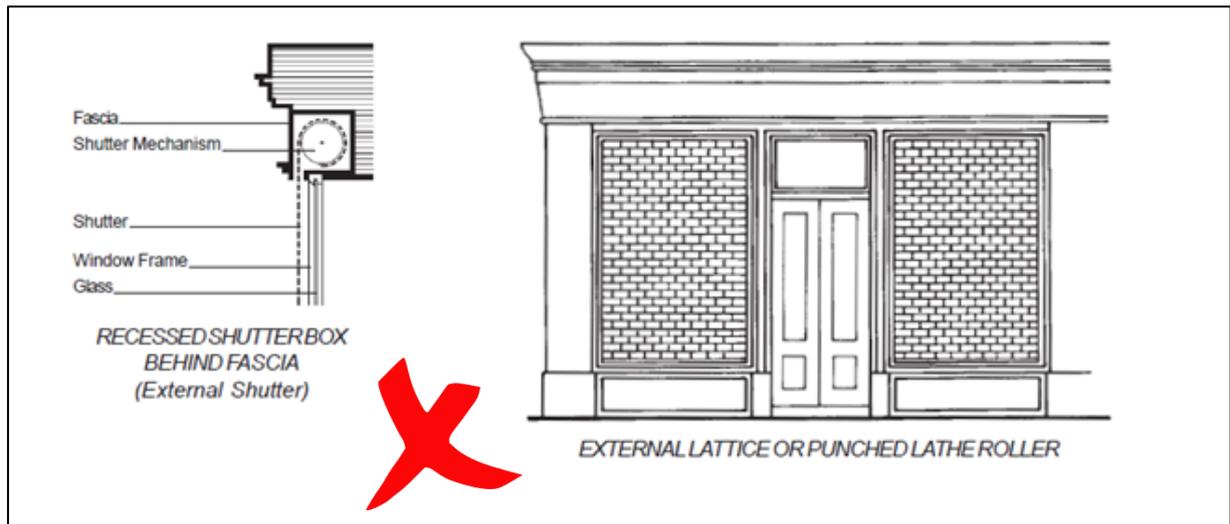
Other External Roller Shutters

A number of open-mesh or partially open mesh types of shutters can be used externally, thus affording some protection to the glass itself whilst still permitting window shopping.

Although these blinds are more visually intrusive than internal screens there will occasions when it is considered acceptable to use them subject to the method of attachment and the precision of the design and finish. Unless the rolled-up blind can be accommodated behind the fascia, a projecting storage box may be required which makes this type of screen less acceptable. It is possible to design roller shutter boxes which are concealed by being recessed behind the fascia of a new shopfront.

The attachment of the side guides for the roller shutter curtains can be damaging to timber elements of the shopfront and careful consideration as to how to minimise this detrimental effect should be explored. It is very likely that roller shutters will need to be bespoke for each shopfront if they are to have any likelihood of being considered acceptable.

Roller shutters which cover/occlude the whole exterior of the shopfront are unlikely to be considered acceptable.



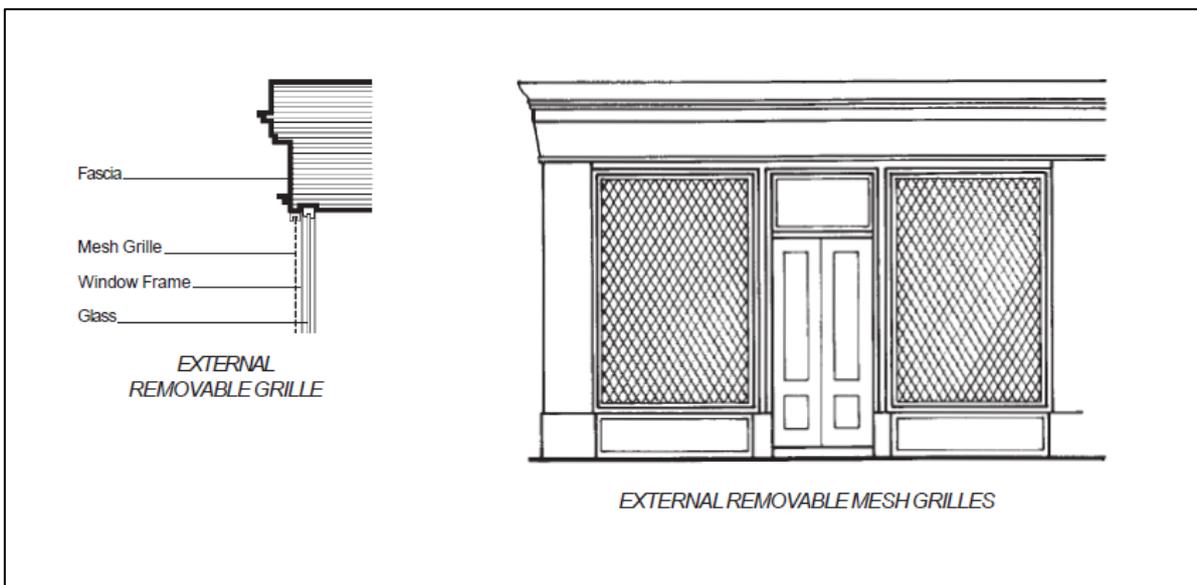
Internal Open Mesh Roller Shutters

These types of shutters may have less of an adverse impact on the appearance of properties. They do not alter the frontages of properties, being located behind the shop window with the use of laminated glass. Due to the minimal visual impact on properties, this type of shutter is considered most appropriate for properties within Conservation Areas and potentially for some Listed Buildings, subject to the details of the attachment and the extent to which they interfere with the historic character and fabric of the building. Ideally internal shutters should leave sufficient space between them and the glass to provide some form of display, lit or otherwise. It is accepted that high value goods are likely to be removed from windows with internal shutters after hours of business.



Removable Mesh Grilles

These are traditionally fitted over windows and doors. The Council recognise that this type of security is difficult to fix / remove from large windows on a daily basis. These grilles are installed outwith opening hours and any planning permission/listed building consent would be conditioned accordingly. However subject to design there may be concertina and/or hinged, side mounted shutters with an open mesh which would not require storage during the opening hours. This is more likely to be something that could be designed into a new shopfront.



There is also the option of designing bespoke fixed shutters to the exterior or interior of a shop window which are both artistic and practical.

Where solid screen shutters have already been installed and enforcement action is no longer appropriate, the opportunity will be taken when, for example, future reconstruction or refurbishment of the premises is proposed to encourage the installation of a security screen which respects the terms of these policy guidelines.

The Council on submission of a retrospective planning application may grant permission for a limited period, the length of time being dependent upon the nature of the installation, the type of premises involved, and the date the works were carried out. The planning permission may authorise the retention of the shutter for a period not exceeding two years. (This effectively represents a concession on the part of the Council, to allow the occupier a restricted period to time to make use of the existing shutter and plan their replacement without the serving of an enforcement notice). Upon the expiry of the temporary period, the shutter or grille must be removed, and if necessary, replaced by a shutter/grille which complies with the guidelines relating to new installations.