

Shop fronts and advertisements:

Historic buildings and conservation areas

1. Introduction

Shop fronts originally had a very specific purpose: to entice potential buyers into the shop and this reason still exists today. Shop fronts are also vital elements in the character and appearance of a street scene.

This guidance aims to avoid bland, soulless shops and reinstate the individualism of Maidstone Town Centre, and the rural service centres of Yalding, Marden, Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham. The purpose of this guide is to enable businesses, their designers, shopfitters, and other professionals to design shop fronts that will enhance the street scene and their location.



Figure 1 – attractive setting encouraging the public into the spaces.

[Alt text: an row of large window openings, behind a colonnade of tall arches which provides an outdoor seating area for the restaurant within the building. The chairs and tables, with the simple lighting feature offers a welcoming impression]

2. A guide to shop fronts and advertisements

Shop fronts have plenty of scope for variety, but the relationship between the shop front and the existing building is of great importance. The shop front should be integrated into the whole building, reflecting its period and style. Shopfronts form part of the character and appeal of Maidstone and the design approach adopted should aim to capture the spirit and character of the town.

The shop front should respect the scale, style, and materials of the settlement, with high standards of design, materials, and workmanship.

Shop front and advertisement design can, if handled with skill and care, enhance conservation areas and improve the appearance of historic buildings. Handled badly, it can have the opposite effect. An attractive shopping environment can have a beneficial effect on the vitality and viability of a shopping area.

3. Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this design guide is to encourage and promote good practice in shop front and advertisement design within Maidstone Town Centre and within the borough. It aims to provide a clear indication of the criteria against which the Council will assess applications for new shop fronts and advertisement within the town.

Its purpose is not to stifle or limit innovative designs, although there is an emphasis on appropriate styles and materials, but to create a shopping environment which respects the character of Maidstone. In considering individual proposals, the Council will use this guide as a basis for assessing their merits.

This guide will also provide information on consents that may be required by the owner or occupant of the shop, or the agents that they may employ. Other consents may include listed building consent, conservation area consent, planning, building control and advertising. A licence will be required if you propose to have an external display or have chairs and tables outside of your shop. We encourage early discussion to help guide you through the process and proposed scheme.

4. Existing character

Maidstone District has two main types of shopping and retail areas, Maidstone Town Centre and the smaller villages and market towns, such as Headcorn and Staplehurst. Local shops are an important part of sustainable village life, and whilst this guide is focused on Maidstone Town Centre, the same principle can be applied to the other retail areas.

5. Brief history of shop fronts –

a. guidance on styles

People have traded from their own properties or simple markets with the use of barrows and stalls, from pre-Roman times. By the late 18th century, permanent sales areas, and shops as we know them today had developed.

The Georgian style became the most popular approach for shop fronts, which are now considered to be ‘traditional’, and by the 19th century, there was the introduction of ‘modern’ materials and technologies, introducing decorative iron work, tiling and more extensive glazing.

The availability of materials, especially glazing, has been the main influence on the change of

fashion. Glass was taxed from 1746 until 1845, and therefore shops reflected this in the smaller size of their windows. The development of manufacturing of plate glass from the early 20th century provided larger and larger panes of glass.

New techniques allowed decorative glass at the top of the shop window to be etched with details of the shop and the goods that it supplied. Coloured glass was introduced by the early twentieth century.

All these buildings have their place in the development of our towns, especially in Maidstone, and therefore should be appreciated for their individual style. A general understanding of the type and age of property is required to ensure that the correct style of shop front is fitted.

Georgian – late 18th century/ early 19th century

- Small, domestic windows or slightly enlarged windows sometimes with bow fronts
- Timber board for sign or narrow fascia
- Small panes of glass
- Limited display and poor natural light
- Some Classical detailing such as pilasters or arched openings
- By the 1830s and 1840s window size was increasing

Victorian – mid to late 19th century

- Cornice, sometimes moulded, may be of timber or stone and may have a lead flashing for weather-protection
- Larger panes of glass with the introduction of plate glass
- Fascia, may be flat or angled or curved and usually of timber
- Console brackets, which mark the end of the shop fascia. May be of a variety of designs but is typically timber.
- Decorative 'Bookend' consoles (found in the late 19th century)
- Pilasters which may be plain, fluted or decorated with geometric designs
- Use of cast iron pillars and other decorative ironwork
- Use of encaustic and geometric tiles in lobbies
- Roller blinds and shutters became integral to the shop front design

Edwardian and early 20th century

- Art Nouveau influences evident with flowing plant forms
- High quality joinery using hardwoods such as mahogany and teak
- Entrance to shop started to have curved glass frontages
- Showcases in entrance and ceilings to lobbies are decoratively panelled
- Clerestory making use of stained or coloured glass or sometimes with small square panes at the top of the windows
- Shop fronts tall and elegant
- Entrances have mosaic tiled floors, sometimes with name incorporated
- High quality brass door fittings

Interwar

- Use of smooth, glossy materials such as Vitrolite (coloured glass), polished granite, marble and faience (tin glazed pottery)
- Little decoration to shop front, although consoles in an elongated and stylised form may be used
- Marble, terrazzo, and mosaic used for lobby floors.
- Black and white geometric tiles also favoured in 1930s
- Use of Art Deco inspired designs, including stepped fascia
- Etched and sandblasted glass, particularly in geometric designs such as zig-zags
- Many shops designed and fitted by specialist shop fitters rather than architects
- Use of window screens to the back of the window, sometimes with opaque glass

Post War

- Mix of styles from the previous generations, mainly undertaken with an 'interpretation' of the surrounding styles
- Introduction of larger shopping malls and centres and the introduction of public pedestrian

Spaces

- Use of modern materials, such as concrete and steel frames for the construction of the buildings allowing large open shop fronts
- Large expanses of fenestration
- Standardized design
- Either monochrome or multi-coloured shop fronts



Figure 2 – post-modern building with simple shop front of large areas of glazing.

[Alt. Text: A modernist, concrete building, set within a high street area, has a simple shop front that works with the host building]

b. Elements of a traditional

shop front

There are several elements that make up a shop frontage – the cornice, fascia, capital, and pilasters and stall riser. Each of these elements should be in proportion to give a balanced and pleasing appearance.

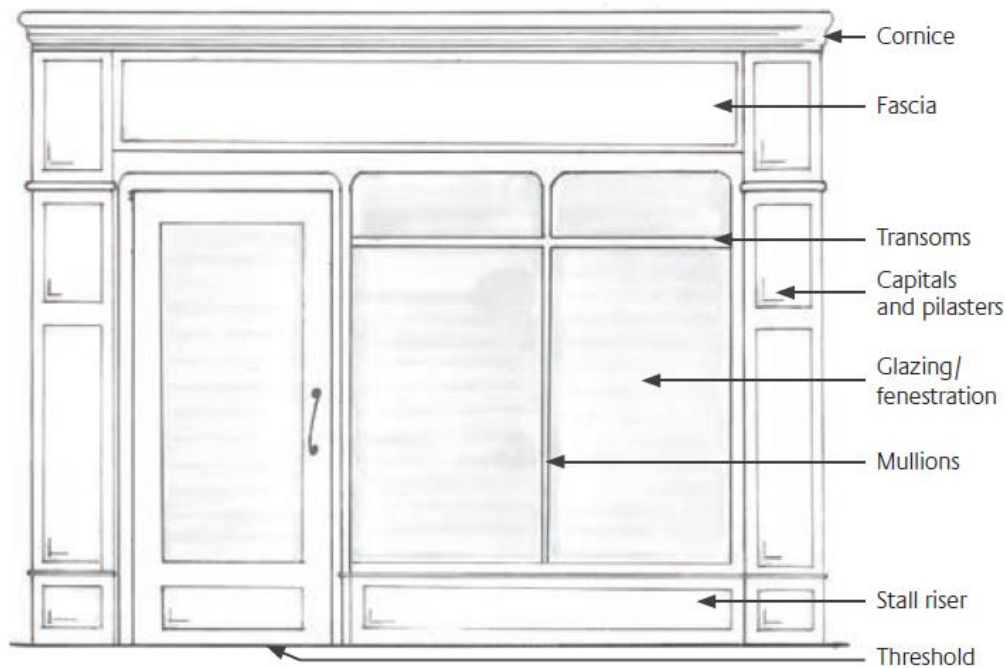


Figure 3 – labelled traditional shop front.

Cornice

The cornice is the decorative or moulded ledge along the top of the fascia. Its purpose is to provide weather protection to the fascia and provides a horizontal visual break to the building.

The fascia is the section that normally has the shop name located on it. It should be approximately 10% of the shop front height, any larger, and the fascia overpowers the front.

Capital and pilasters

The capital and pilasters provide the vertical break or edge to the shop front. The capitals sometimes referred to as corbels or consoles, sit on top of the pilaster, a flat version of a column.

Stall riser

The stall riser is the section beneath the shop window usually constructed in timber, brick, or stone, or covered with glazed tiles.

Glazing/fenestration

The glazing forms the main plane of the shop windows. The glazing is held in a frame which can vary in thickness and detail.

Mullions

Traditionally timber, though in later shop fronts can be of metal, mullions provide vertical structural support to the shop glazing.

Transoms

Traditionally timber, though later shop fronts can be of metal, transoms provide horizontal structural support to the shop glazing.

Threshold

The threshold is the entrance to the shop.

c. Design style

By understanding the style of the period, it is possible to ascertain the appropriate design for any proposed works.

The influencing factors may include:

- the age and the style of the existing building
- the age of the existing shop front
- the materials previously used and to be used in the new shop front, the business or purpose of the shop – original shop fronts often reflected the goods they were selling, such as a high stall riser to draw the eye to small items such as jewellery or lower stall risers for furniture or larger items
- the location of the shop, either within the centre of the High Street, or a smaller lane off the High Street.

As part of the overall design, it is the little details that make the buildings interesting. Many of these items, such as door handles, patterns in glass or sign writing on the side of a building, may be original and an important part of the historic value. These features should be retained and incorporated into the proposed design.

The layout of the shop front should start with the placement of the door, which is generally either to the centre or the side. From here the type of fenestration should be decided including the height and construction of the stall riser.

Many shops showed their wealth by having a recessed doorway or threshold, as it provided more display area but less sales space.



Figure 4 – good example of shop frontage, with each building having its own frontage.



Figure 5 – poor street scene, with overlarge shop front and a combined shop front across two buildings.

It is important when designing the new shop front that it should be in proportion to the building. Shop frontage that covers, cuts, or removes existing features such as pilasters, date stones, windows to the first floor, or other important architectural details will lose the integrity of the building. The individual identity of each separate building must be retained.

New shop fronts (and fascia's) should not cut across the frontages of different buildings. Where two buildings are to be occupied by the same business, the shop fronts should be designed to identify the separation between the buildings either with different height stall risers, fascia levels and careful positioning of window transoms where appropriate.

The vertical sightlines should stop at the top of the shop front, typically with the cornice, without

interfering with the building above. This visual break will vary in height with the building. The symmetry of a building should be taken into consideration.

A Georgian building generally has a symmetrical style, whereas vernacular buildings have a tendency to asymmetrical. This will affect the horizontal and vertical relationships of door placement, fascia's, transoms & mullions, signage, and other details.



Figure 6 – a good example of a shop front as it is proportion to the building.

[Alt Text: a row of buildings, formed of a mock Tudor, timber framed building, with a stone shop front, with a red-brick polite building, with sash windows and overhanging eaves. The shop front to this building reflects the polite architecture of the buildings, with the openings and details responding to the sash windows above to create an attractive and appealing shop front.]

Colour choice, like design, is not only subjective but allied to the image the designer wishes to project. Colours are often used to reflect the type of shop, such as red and white for Barbers, or British Racing green is deemed as a classic colour, or yellow seen as vibrant and easy going. Colours do not have to be deemed as traditional or heritage, but should be complimentary to the surroundings, the materials, the building, its neighbours and to the period of the property. The use of stained or varnished timber was mainly used during late Victorian and early Edwardian periods when the trading of hard woods made these timbers accessible. This finish is now extremely unusual, and therefore painted timber will be the preferred option for the majority of replacement shop fronts. The use of hardwoods today would be discouraged unless it has been resourced from a sustainable source.

Large areas of undivided glass should, in general, be avoided within older buildings as they are of less visual interest and can detract from the overall character of an older building. However, in contemporary shop fronts, larger glass panes are a characteristic of their appearance.

Consideration of the age and style of the building will influence the size of the fenestration selected. The details of the mullions and transoms will be dictated by the form of the frontage. Georgian details are very delicate and simple, with Victorian details thicker and are of more solid appearance. The use of metal frames and transoms was only developed in the late Edwardian period.

Although there is a wide range of design solutions to any given place, the design of the fenestration, the detailing, the choice of materials and the balance of new to old should relate to the building as a whole. The installation of a 'traditional' shop front will not always be appropriate. Some premises are constructed in a style where a contemporary design would be more suitable. The individualism of each building's frontage can be important to the overall appearance of the street and therefore alternative styles may be acceptable, subject to the character of the building in which they are proposed.

d. Corporate Identity

People expect to see retail chains in our high streets, but it may be necessary for these retail outlets to adapt their use of corporate images/logos to retain the harmony of the individual building and street scene. Most now recognise that this adds value to their customer perception of their brand. The use of internally lit fascia signs and projecting signs are actively discouraged. The use of individually designed shop fronts that work with the setting and the building is encouraged.

A standard 'heritage' solution may be offered by retailers, but these are often designed for a specific historic period (generally Victorian) and may not be appropriate for other properties.

The use of corporate colours provides shoppers with an instant visual connection with the chain store. Corporate colour schemes will generally be acceptable, though the scheme should not conflict with the building or the setting.

We expect to see the individual property and its setting considered as part of the design. The justification for the design should be included in the Design & Access Statement and the Heritage Impact Assessment.

e. Materials and workmanship

Materials used in shop fronts need to be compatible with the building and the selection of the appropriate materials should be guided by the age of the building.

Traditional materials, such as timber, were used because they could be easily painted to give the shop a quick, cheap make over. Paint also allowed for features to be picked out in contrasting colours, making the shop front more interesting and distinguishable.

The use of metals, such as bronze and cast iron tended to be used from the Edwardian era onwards, and therefore, would only be considered appropriate for a building of this era or later. Plastic or polished aluminium frames are generally discouraged within historic buildings, conservation areas except where specific circumstances justify, but would be suitable for the more modern buildings within the town.



Figure 7 – Art Deco inspired building, with the Crittal windows above would suit metal shop front.

{Alt. Text: An Art Deco building with a simple curved brick façade, with horizontal render bands, contrasts with the modern shopping mall elevation, which has a grey elevation, with yellow vertical, asymmetrical lines which project from the main elevation. To the Art Deco building, the shop front responds to the metal framed windows which form part of the design.

Small details, such as good quality fixings with neat returns, trims and mouldings can be critical to successful design. Good quality workmanship will enhance the appearance of both the shop and the street.

f. Accessibility

When altering an existing access or creating a new shop front, there is a statutory requirement under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure ease of accessibility for both wheelchair users and the ambulant disabled (such as mobility problems or poor vision). Detailed guidance on items such as the size of door openings, ease of door openings and height of latches, etc can be obtained from Building Regulations (Part M) or Building Control Officers.

In some cases, it may be necessary to install ramps, clearly readable signage, including brail or foreign language, etc., all of which will require careful consideration in respect of location, size and materials used. The location of call pads for wheelchair assistance or to open automatic doors will require careful setting to be accessible without causing visual harm. Ramps should be located internally. Where this is not possible a temporary and removable access ramp will comply with regulations.

Traditionally the threshold for the door is set back from the pavement and this should be retained or re-instated where appropriate. This can be used to personalise the threshold, eg placing name in tiles.

g. Summary

- Design of shop front should complement the building, street, and location
- Consideration should be given to the smaller details that can make the building interesting and distinctive
- Layout of the shop front should be in proportion to the building
- Each building should be clearly identifiable
- Colours should complement the building and reflect the type of shop
- Materials used should be compatible to building age and style
- Good quality workmanship and materials will be encouraged
- Standard corporate schemes will need to be amended to ensure it enhances and protects conservation areas and is of a suitable scale/ design for the building.

Inspiration could be taken from the historic photographs of Maidstone, which are available from the Historic England's 'Red Boxes', which has photographs of the High Street and surrounding streets - [https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/gallery/6323?place=Maidstone%2c+Kent+\(Place\)&terms=Maidstone&searchtype=englandsplaces&i=0&wm=1&bc=2|5|10|11](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/gallery/6323?place=Maidstone%2c+Kent+(Place)&terms=Maidstone&searchtype=englandsplaces&i=0&wm=1&bc=2|5|10|11)

6. Canopies

Canopies and blinds can add interest to the appearance of shopping streets as well as shading goods and customers. They should be historically accurate, simple in form and retractable. The colour and material choice should reflect the overall colour scheme. The use of bright plastic or highly reflective materials is unlikely to be appropriate.

Fixed material canopies are likely to be inappropriate, unless they were part of the original design of the building. The reinstatement or refurbishment of fixed metal canopies, particularly favoured in the Edwardian period, will be encouraged if evidence can be found for the proposed style.



Figure 8 – attractive pair of shop fronts, complete with retractable canopy to provide shade for the Barbers,

[Alt. Text: a pair of painted, two-storey, brick-built buildings, with the ground floor used by different businesses. To the right-hand side, a barber's pole is visible with its twisting strip of red, white and blue. To provide screening from the sunlight, there is a large canopy of blue and white strips, which whilst not only serving a practical purpose, adds interest and form to the street scene.]

7. Signage and lettering

Signage that is clear and instantly recognisable is essential but is too often driven solely by the corporate identity of national companies.

Traditionally the name of the shop would have been in the centre of the fascia board. Victorian and Edwardian signs were busy and highly decorative, advertising the trade or products sold within, whilst other periods chose a simpler, plainer style.

The selection of the font and type of lettering used will be influenced by the design of the shop front, with the selection ranging from traditional hand painted lettering on fascia's and windows to the use of raised three-dimensional lettering and lettering on metal plaques.

The colour of lettering should be clearly contrasting from the fascia colour. Lettering applied directly to the building should ideally be raised metal letters. Plastic, highly reflective and back lit fascia's will be discouraged.

As a general rule the size of lettering should be designed to relate to the overall size of the building and to the depth and length of the fascia. The lettering should be well spaced and well proportioned.

8. Projecting or hanging signs

Projecting or hanging signs are traditional forms of advertisement and can add character to and enliven a shopping street. A hanging sign should ideally be constructed of timber or metal and painted with details of the shop. They can be made more individual by being applicable to the type of retail unit e.g. cut in the shape of a boot for a cobbler or shoemaker.



Figure 9 – Shop signage responds to the building and the product for sale.

[Alt. Text: above the shop front of a shoe shop is an elaborate cast iron bracket holding a simple board with the name of the shop 'Golden Boot', on which rests a giant golden boot, reflecting what the shop sells. This provides further visual interest to the street scene and creates a simple way finder]

9. A' boards

A licence is required if you wish to put an external display, chairs, tables, outside of your shop. This is controlled by Kent County Council. Further details can be found here -

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-highways-permit-or-licence/highways-permit-and-licence-terms-and-conditions/tables-and-chairs-on-the-highway-terms-and-conditions>

10. Internal advertisements

Signs set behind windows are in most cases subject to the same regulations and control as those fixed externally. Permanent window advertisements, such as telephone numbers and email addresses can be acceptable if sensitively designed, coloured, and positioned.

Blanking out windows with advertising is strongly discouraged as this reduces active frontage. Open window displays allow potential customers a view into the shop. At night, this will also allow for active security.



Figure 10 – clever use of the shop front and private doors allows for sensitive advertising.

{Alt. text: a narrow shop building, within a much grander terrace of the different buildings, offers both a public entrance to the shop, with a curved narrow window display, and a private door to the accommodation above. On this door is an advertising poster for glasses, which allows for a more active street scene, rather than a plain domestic door.]

11. Lighting

Good lighting enhances the shop and neighbourhood by picking up architectural features, lighting up the signage or lighting the display in the shop window. Light fittings are a relatively new invention so there is no historically correct style. They should be carefully selected and located to suit the style of the shop and be as discreet as possible such as trough lighting or spotlights. Internally lit projecting signs and fascia's do not enhance the building and are unlikely to be appropriate for historic buildings or conservation areas.

Light pollution can have a negative effect on the shop, ecology and neighbours so light levels should be carefully considered. General 'flood' lighting will be discouraged and there are laws governing light pollution.

Appropriate forms of illumination can include, depending on individual circumstances:

- Externally front-lit or 'halo' back-lit individual letters, depending on the quality of the design and the position of the sign when fixed to the building
- Discreet use of spotlighting of fascia's and hanging signs
- Signs painted on to shop windows which are internally lit

- Some types of independent or freestanding illuminated signs behind window glass. Such signs are subject to control if less than 1 metre from the glass.

12. Security grilles and shutters

Effective security methods can be justified to safeguard premises and goods; however, their installation should be considered carefully and should not be to the detriment of the street. The preferred means of achieving security is to use toughened glass, which has a negligible impact on the appearance of the street.

For higher forms of security and protection, additional glazing bars and internal window grilles, which allow views through are the preferred options. They not only keep the street scene open, and therefore, visually attractive, but also provide added security as people can see into the shop. The cumulative effect of numerous external grilles or shutters along a street is unsightly and can lead to a reduction in 'active frontage', which may lead to a drop in footfall and possible anti-social behaviour.

The use of permanently fixed external grills will not be permitted in public places. Installation of these grills at the rear of a property may create an accessible climbing system enabling illegal access to this or adjoining buildings.

13. Alarms

The Council recognises the need for an Intruder Alarm boxes. The location of the external box and the wires require consideration. A neat solution is for the box to be located within or directly above the fascia, with the cables running discreetly along the top of the fascia.

14. Mechanical and electrical plant

Careful setting of mechanical and electrical fixtures and fittings, including air conditioning condenser units, etc will be required. Locating the units to the rear, or areas screened from view which do not harm the fabric of a historic building, or the street scene will be encouraged.

15. External displays and street furniture

Use of the property frontage for external displays and street furniture will normally be encouraged because it can enliven the character of a street. Use of the public highway including footways for this purpose requires a licence, and this is available from the local authority (refer below).



Figure 11 – external setting with simple demarcation.

[Alt. Text: a wide shop front in a traditional, Georgian building, offers outdoor seating on mock-grass, with simple wooden screens to form a welcoming out door seating area for the restaurant.]

16. Cash points

The installation of external ATMs will be encouraged, though careful placement within the shop front should be undertaken as part of the overall design. Where they are being considered as a later addition, they should be placed to respect the existing shop front, with careful detailing to the surround and any associated advertising. In a select number of situations, it may be more appropriate to consider installing the ATMs internally in a lobby which will also provide security for the user.

17. Summary

- Canopies should fit with the building and use appropriate colours and materials
- Good access should be provided into the shop
- Signage should be written in a suitable font and size for the building. The fascia should be approximately 10% of the shop front height with the lettering written on the fascia
- Backlit fascia boards and internally lit projecting signs will be discouraged as they distract from the building
- Projecting or hanging signs are encouraged. The brackets for the signs should reflect the style and age of the property
- 'A' boards are discouraged as they can add clutter to the street
- External lighting should be small and discreet

- If security grills are required, they should be retractable, internal to the shop front and open grilled
- External alarm boxes and other plant should be carefully located to ensure that any architectural features can be seen
- External displays and street furniture requires a licence
- ATMs should be installed within the shop, preferably within a lobby area.

18. Internal fit out works

If a building is listed, listed building consent will be required for works to the property. It is a common misconception that it is only the façade or external elevations that are listed. In fact, the whole of the property is protected by the listed status. Any historical internal features should be retained, and this may restrain the use to which the building can be put, particularly if the works affect the fabric or layout of the property, such as removal of (historic or significant) fixtures, forming new openings, such as doors, hatches, large holes for extract fans, etc., plastering over walls, dry lining and insertion of new walls and fixed counters.

The installation of freestanding units and display racks, replacement of kitchen units or general like for like repairs will not require Listed Building Consent.

Early discussion should be undertaken with the Planning Department is encouraged as they will be able to guide you through the process and provide advice. For works to historic buildings early contact should also be made with the Heritage, Landscape and Design Team for specialist advice.

19. Do I need consent?

Before undertaking any work, it is always advisable to contact the Council to discuss your proposals. This can be undertaken as part of a pre-application process for Planning, which could include Conservation Officer guidance (<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/apply-for-planning-permission/primary-areas/pre-application-advice>).

Depending on the proposed works and the building, there may be other consents that may be required. When planning the project, it would be beneficial to programme in the time to submit and obtain consents. Planning and Listed Building Consent has a statutory period to allow for consultation with the public and statutory consultees. Once the application has been registered, the process will take between 8-12 weeks depending on the complexity of the project.

a. Listed Building Consent

Listed Building Consent will be required for all works which affect the character or fabric of a listed building (other than repair), this usually includes:

- new or replacement signs as well as changes to shop fronts
- internal works, apart from standard shop 'fit out' works, which will affect the character and/ or fabric of the building
- investigation works, such as the removal of fixed display units and wall coverings.

To confirm if your building is listed, you could either look at Historic England's Search the List website (but check the surrounding area as sometimes the blue triangle is on an adjacent building, Maidstone Town Centre – Shop front design Guidance – DRAFT r3

or could include a terrace or row of listed buildings) - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/map-search> or you could contact the Conservation Department to request confirmation.

Listed Building Consent can be applied for online via the Planning Portal and is free. It is worth noting that the Planning Portal will ask to calculate the fee but will confirm no cost. A list of information required for the application is included below (with Planning Permission).

As part of the process, you will need to undertake a Heritage Statement. Details on how to undertake a simple assessment is available on our website. For more complex works to listed building, it is recommended to employ or consult the services of a Heritage Specialist. Commissioning a statement, or having architectural drawings produced, will add to length of the process, and this should be included within any preparation of the programme of works, and could impact on proposed opening or commissioning the works to be undertaken.

Undertaking work to a listed building without consent is a Criminal Act (under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990. Should you have any concerns, please contact the Heritage Department or request guidance from a Heritage professional.

b. Conservation Area Approval

Works to a non-listed building in a Conservation Area (Maidstone Centre; Chillington House, Ashford Road & Holy Church, details - <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/heritage-and-landscape/tier-3-primary-areas/conservation-areas>) may require planning permission if one of the following is involved:

- Change of colour to external shop front
- New shop front
- Installation of any external fittings or advertising boards

As part of the consideration of the application, we are looking to retain or enhance the character of the area. Some conservation areas have appraisals available which provide some guidance on the character and what makes them special. Details of these (including maps) can be found on the web link above.

c. Planning Permission

Installing new shop fronts, grilles, shutters, and projecting blinds will require Planning Permission, in addition to either of the above consents (if applicable). If the shop is to have a change of use, such as conversion into a takeaway from a retail unit, then Planning Consent will also be required.

Planning permission can be applied for via the Planning Portal (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk/>) which provides a step-by-step guidance to how to apply. To allow the application to be registered, we do require certain information.

In summary you will need to provide:

- Site Location Plan (Scale 1:1250 or 1:2500)
- Block Plan or (Scale 1:500) Site Plan (Scale 1:200)
- Existing & Proposed Elevation Drawings (Scale 1:50 or 1:100) – if there is a proposed change to the elevations

- Existing & Proposed Floor/Roof Plans (Scale 1:50 or 1:100) – if there is a proposed change to the floor or roof plan
- Site Levels and Sections (Scale 1:50 or 1:100) – if there is a proposed change of level
- Design and Access Statement
- Heritage Statement – to provide details of the significance of the heritage asset (listed building or conservation area) and to undertake an impact assessment of the proposed works on the significance or setting of the heritage asset
- Community Infrastructure Levy (Form 1) Additional Information and (Form 2) Assumption of Liability

Further details on the requirements can be found on our website -

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/apply-for-planning-permission/primary-areas/apply-for-planning-permission> If pre-application advice has been sought, the Case Officer will confirm the information required.

To apply for planning permission there is a fee which will be calculated during the application process on the Planning Portal. A joint planning and listed building consent application can be made on the Planning Portal.

d. Building Control

Building Regulations are there to ensure that buildings are safe, healthy, accessible, and sustainable for current and future generations.

Therefore, permission is required for:

- Changes to the means of escape, including reposition of doorway/ changing from a double door to a single,
- some alterations to shop fronts, including reposition of doorway,
- for any internal structural alterations
- any works affecting the health and safety of the public and employees, such as fire protection.

The building regulations do not apply to advertisements.

Building Control applications can be submitted to Maidstone Borough Council -

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/planning-and-building/primary-areas/building-control> . Building Control services can also be undertaken by Approved Inspectors.

e. Advertisement Consent

Advertisement Consent is required for most types of new or replacement shop front signage, especially if it is to be illuminated. The consent process is via the Planning Portal, but a separate application will need to be submitted from the Planning or Listed Building Consent application.

Information on the type of proposed advertisement will need to be included, together with plans and drawings, which could be the same drawings as the planning application (if required) together with a location plan. A fee is payable for this application.

f. Licensing

A licence is required if you wish to put an external display, chairs, tables, outside of your shop. This is controlled by Kent County Council. Further details can be found here -

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/highway-permits-and-licences/apply-for-a-highways-permit-or-licence/highways-permit-and-licence-terms-and-conditions/tables-and-chairs-on-the-highway-terms-and-conditions>

20. Relevant policy

- National Planning Policy Framework
- The Town and Country Planning
- Control of Advertisements (England) Regulations 2007
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The Adopted Maidstone Local Plan - Policies

21. Contacts