



ADUR DISTRICT COUNCIL

DESIGN BULLETIN NO.1

Shopfront Design



ADUR DISTRICT
COUNCIL

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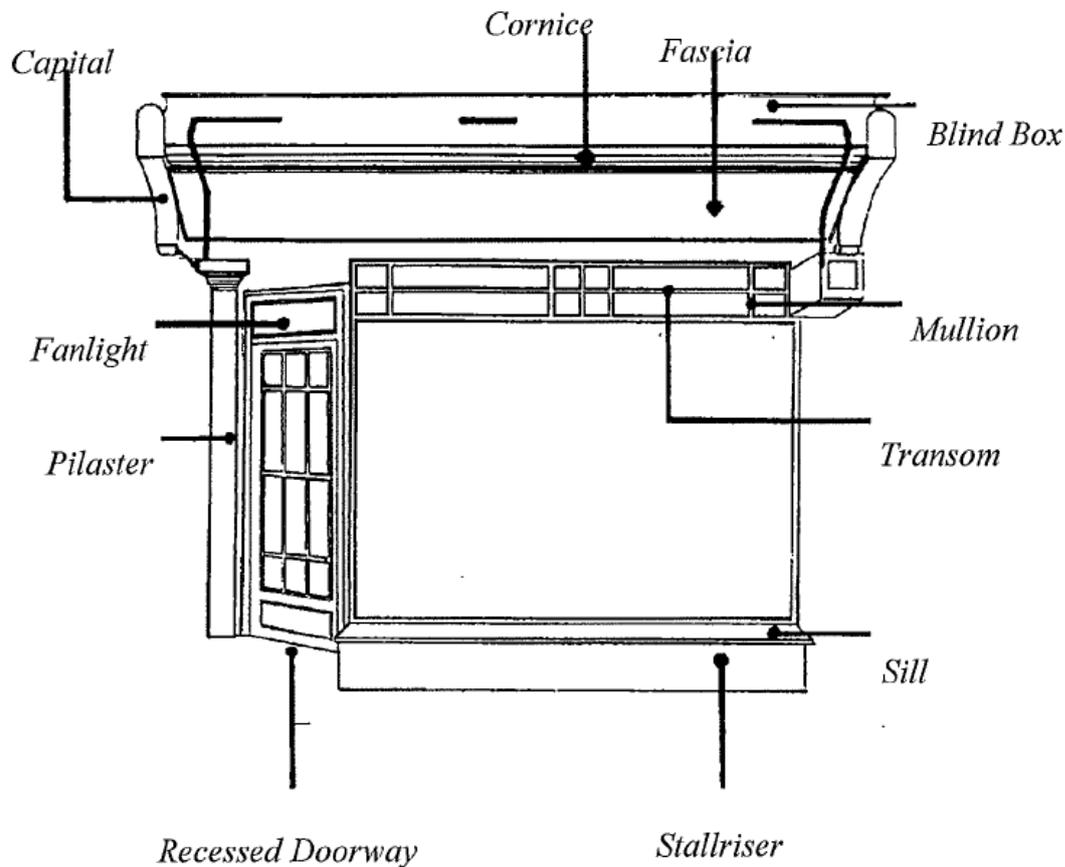
I. Introduction

- 1.1 This design guide is set within the context of the Shoreham Town Centre Regeneration Strategy which aims to secure the long term economic regeneration of the town and to conserve and enhance its unique historic and townscape heritage. The control of shopfront designs, signs and advertisements can be considered as one step towards achieving these aims. Shopfronts in this context also includes office fronts.
- 1.2 It is also a response to the increase in commercial activity and the availability of modern materials which have had an undesirable effect on individual buildings and the streetscene. Through time one can see that frontages are too often replaced with new poorly designed shop fronts, in colours and materials that do little to enhance the streetscene. This is illustrated and evident by the arrival of the “corporate image” to shopping areas, including betting shops, estate agents and supermarkets. Standardised forms of “identity” and “image” have resulted in the loss of many individual and attractive shopfronts. Whilst the desire for a “corporate image” is recognised, some designs need to be modified in order to fit sympathetically with the period and architectural style of the building. It is also important that alterations, restorations and replacements are carried out sympathetically in conservation areas.
- 1.3 Within Shoreham Town Centre the quality of each street is varied in terms of the style and age of buildings. For example, in Brunswick Road the buildings are predominantly small scale in a mainly Edwardian development. The shopfronts are the prominent feature in this area and the destruction of existing features will be strongly resisted and individual improvements will be expected to preserve or enhance the quality of the area.
- 1.4 East Street is lined mainly with two-storey buildings which create an interesting skyline and streetscene. Some of the buildings are incongruous with the streetscene particularly in terms of materials, signs and scale. The area is partly adjoined by the church grounds with a background of trees and the War Memorial. The High Street contains few buildings of architectural merit but the visual quality of the street exists where small individual units of two and three storeys remain.
- 1.5 Therefore the same set of restrictions cannot be applied in a “broad brush” approach in terms of design, features and materials to the whole of the town centre.
- 1.6 It is therefore intended that this design guide will provide designers with advice to the criteria and controls regarding planning applications in this area. It is not intended to provide a set of rules to restrict the contribution of architects and developers to the townscape but to provide a framework to enable them to make a positive contribution to the visual quality of the town centre.

2. Legislation

- 2.1 Alterations and the replacement of shopfronts require planning permission where it is proposed to make a material change to the external appearance of the building. However, works such as redecoration or straightforward repairs are not normally subject to planning control. Shoreham Town Centre is designated as a Conservation Area (see Appendix I). Under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas. In this instance Adur Local Plan 2017 Policies 11, 16 and 17 apply.
- 2.2 Any alterations to shopfronts that are part of a listed building will need to preserve the character of the building. Listed Building Consent would be required for minor alterations which on other buildings may not need permission such as internal alterations.
- 2.3 The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 permit a number of advertisements to be displayed without the express consent of the local planning authority.
- 2.4 Advertisements require a separate application for the control of advertisement consent. If located in the Conservation Area, advertisements should respect the character, proportions and design of the buildings on which they are to be displayed, including the use of traditional materials where necessary.
- 2.5 In any circumstance, it is advisable to contact the Planning Department before carrying out any works.

3. Elements of a Traditional Shopfront



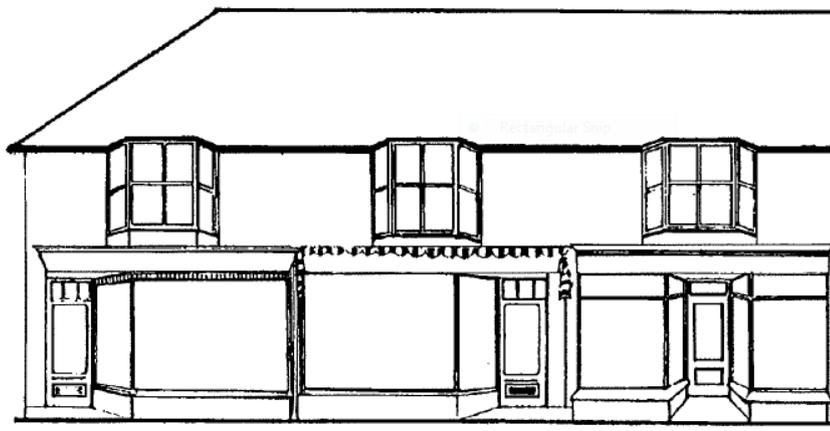
- 3.1 The above diagram illustrates the elements of a traditional shopfront. One can see that the frontage is within a space indicated by the pilasters, cornice and stallriser. The elements are well designed, in proportion with one another and respect the scale of the building to which they are attached. Each element is an important architectural feature which adds interest to the façade and the streetscene, instead of a plain plate glass window. The pilasters identify vertical subdivisions between shopfronts; the fascia provides the space for advertising; the cornice provides a strong line to the top of the shopfront and protects the fascia from the weather, and the stallriser provides a solid base and protection for the window display area.
- 3.2 These features can be provided and contained within the design of new shopfronts as discussed throughout the following sections.

4. Design Advice for Shopfronts and Signs

- 4.1 Most changes to shopfronts occur when the use or occupation of premises changes with the most common alteration being carried out to the window display area and fascias. Where traditional shopfronts of merit exist, the Local Planning Authority encourages these to be retained and repaired to accommodate the new use. However, if the shopfront is of

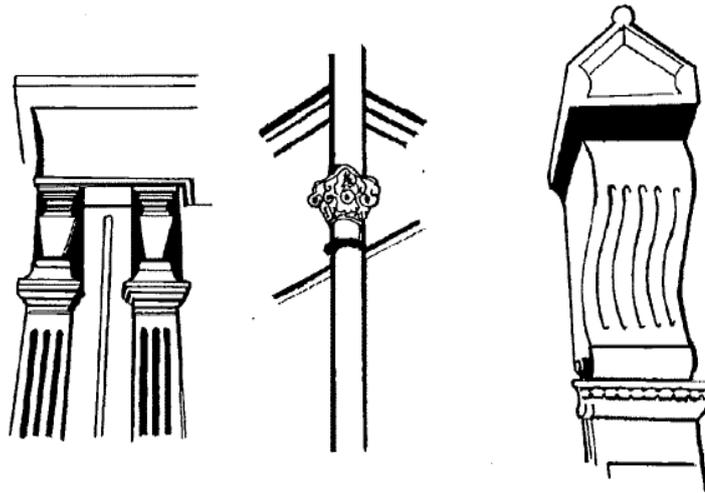
no merit or beyond a repairable state, then an application for replacement would be considered favourably. Where a shopfront is replaced the question arises as to whether the new design should reflect the traditional or a modern design.

- 4.2 A new shopfront should not be designed in isolation but conceived as part of the whole building into which it is fitted. Therefore, if a traditional shopfront is to be fitted it must be historically accurate with respect paid to scale, proportions and architectural style of the building and the relationship with other facades. Building widths and subdivisions should be continued where a parade of shops exists but sameness is not always appropriate in certain streets which have a variety of different building styles.



Traditional shopfronts which contribute to the character of the conservation area and should be retained in the street scene.

- 4.3 These points can be applied to new shopfronts which can, with careful design, be inserted or alterations carried out sympathetically on existing fronts, without having a detrimental effect on the building or streetscene.



Victorian timber detailing which is often lost by modern shopfronts

- 4.4 Many traditional features such as pilasters, capitals or fascias exist behind over-large fascias and large expanses of glass. In these instances it is often possible to revert to the original shopfront with relatively little cost.
- 4.5 With regard to the streetscene new shopfronts should acknowledge the features which occur throughout the street and on other buildings. New shopfronts should have a clearly defined framework of pilasters, stallrisers with common heights and cornices. The proportions of the elements should achieve a visual balance with consistent bay widths and depths of fascia. Each shopfront should be seen in the context of the design of the whole façade and fenestration of the upper floors, as well as the street scene.

Inappropriate shopfronts



Examples of buildings within shopping areas with modern shopfronts. Overlarge fascias cutting across architectural details and amalgamated units bear no relationship to the vertical subdivision of the upper floors and are out of character with the streetscene.

Appropriate shopfronts



Shopfronts have incorporated architectural features into the new design, where they exist. The vertical and horizontal subdivisions relate to the scale of the individual building and street scene.

Fascias

- 4.6 The fascia is an important focal point of a shopfront and its style and proportion should be incorporated into the design of the shop and not be treated as a separate element. New fascias should be retained within existing pilasters and a well-defined cornice.
- 4.7 They should be well below the level of the cornice or the sills of the first floor windows. Often fascia heights and depths vary from shop to shop and produce a chaotic streetscene which should be avoided. Therefore, where there is a terrace of shops, fascias should be aligned to a standard depth to maintain a visual balance.
- 4.8 Where shops have been amalgamated into one unit, they are often linked by a continuous fascia which is too dominant and often cuts across the pattern of the street. Separate fascias with a visual link are preferable.
- 4.9 Over-dominant fascias tend to elongate frontages and unbalance the unity of the streetscene. As a general rule, new fascias should not project beyond the existing fascia or obscure, damage or project in front of any architectural details.
- 4.10 Where a street is characterised by fascias canted forward, the fascia structure should be retained intact and the only advertisement itself is replaced. The replacement of existing traditional fascias with projecting box fascia signs would not be acceptable as they are considered to be visually detrimental to the streetscene and the character of the shop concerned.
- 4.11 Fascias should normally be no more than one fifth of the height of the shopfront and no more than 0.9m high but smaller dimensions may often be required.



Fascias which are above the sills of first floor windows create a visually unbalanced streetscene.

- 4.12 On traditional buildings, fascias made of timber are preferred. However, flat acrylic fascias are sometimes acceptable in instances where they have a matt finish. Acrylic flat or box fascias in bright, garish colours will normally not be accepted. Fascias usually have cornice detailing above which gives protection from the weather as well as being decorative and should be retained or inserted where appropriate.
- 4.13 Applications for express consent to display advertisements are required for illuminated signs in the conservation area. Fully illuminated fascias will not normally be approved but, if illumination is required by the occupier, subtle lighting can be provided with carefully directed beams, internally individual lit letters (where the background is blacked out), or concealed fascia lighting.

Signwriting

- 4.14 Signwriting for shops should be chosen with care as in most cases, the simplest is often most appropriate. Lettering should be easy to read and must relate to the size of the fascia.

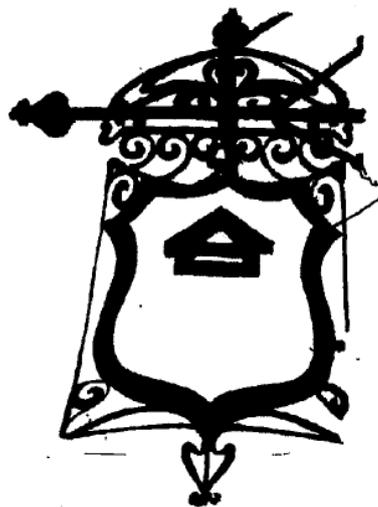


Examples of lettering that fits well into the domestic scale of traditional buildings.

- 4.15 Where thin sheet material is used for lettering, it should be applied directly onto the fascia and not project forward on stalks. Built-up letters should be no more than 25mm deep and in one colour and one material, applied individually. Where buildings do not have fascias, it may be appropriate to apply lettering directly to the wall or to have it painted onto the glazing.
- 4.16 In conservation areas, the most satisfactory method for signs is lettering and motifs handpainted by signwriters. Applied acrylic lettering is another alternative. Gold leaf and light colours, when applied to a darker background, reflect light and can be read at night, thereby, in some instances, removing the need for unsuitable illuminated signs.
- 4.17 If more information is required to be displayed than the fascia is able to accommodate, then a limited amount of decorative lettering could be painted onto the window. Where the upper floors of a building are used for a business, lettering of an appropriate type can be applied to the windows when they relate to a separate business and not to the use at street level.

Projecting and Hanging Signs

- 4.18 A maximum of only one projecting sign is acceptable per shop and it should be in a position which does not obscure other shops or damage architectural features. It should not be presumed that a projecting sign will necessarily be granted consent on every premise.
- 4.19 Projecting signs are becoming more standardised along with “corporate images” and are often in the form of projecting illuminated boxes which are normally not acceptable in traditional areas. Well -designed hanging signs suspended from traditional brackets (e.g. in wrought iron) can enhance the appearance of the shopfront and add interest to the street. Modern designs can be acceptable provided that the structure and finish are in keeping with the area.



Symbols and wrought iron brackets are more sympathetic than projecting box signs

- 4.20 The most appropriate form of illumination for hanging signs is picture lighting but spotlights attached to the building adjacent to the sign is acceptable in some cases.
- 4.21 Many shops in Shoreham still retain the original bracket for hanging signs between the windows of the upper floors. Where they do exist careful consideration will be given to reinstating a suitable sign. If no bracket exists, the projecting sign or symbol should be positioned at fascia level and should be of a high quality design relating to scale and size to the building on which it is mounted.

Windows and Doors

- 4.22 Windows and doors should respect the small vertical scale of traditional buildings. Windows should, therefore, be sub-divided into panels through the use of transoms and mullions in an appropriate method to suit the character of the shopfront and building. Large expanses of glass tend to elongate a building and create “open voids” in the streetscene. The most suitable solution to this would be to subdivide the area with narrow glazing bars which have the advantage of providing visual “support” to the upper floors. Smaller rectangular panes (with a vertical emphasis) are appropriate for early Victorian buildings, with larger glazed areas being more appropriate to late nineteenth century styles.
- 4.23 If a shop is part of a terrace which still retains examples of the original doors and windows, these should be replicated to retain balance and rhythm. Recessed doorways should be incorporated into new designs as they relieve flat and featureless designs. They also provide porches and additional window display area. Window frames, mullions and transoms should be constructed in timber as it creates an established look. However, colour-coated or anodised aluminium and steel may also be acceptable in some instances, even though they give less scope for achieving individual designs and subdividing window areas. Although modern materials can be incorporated into many scenes, they will not be acceptable in areas of traditional character where traditional materials will be required.
- 4.24 Shop windows should not be obscured by a proliferation of stickers resulting in advertisement clutter.

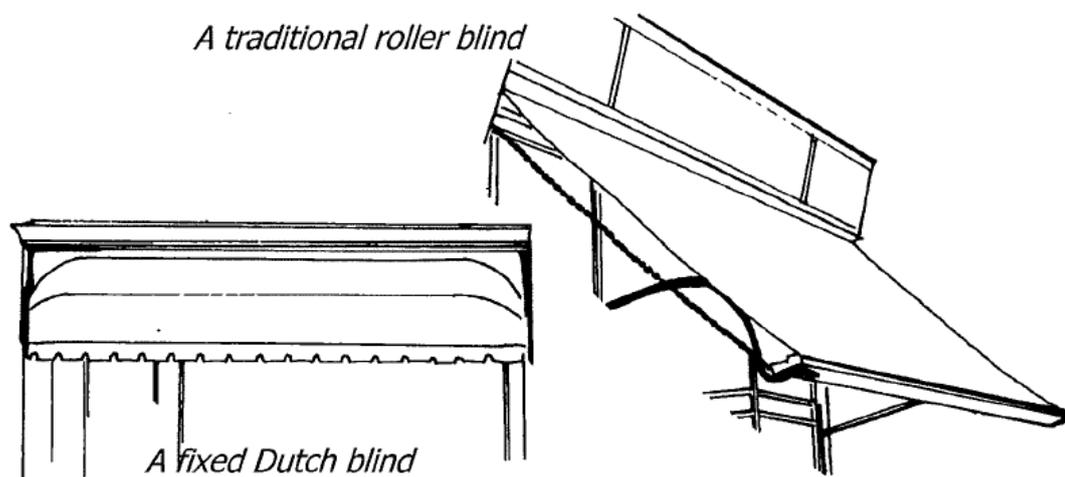
Stallrisers and Pilasters

- 4.25 Stallrisers provide a decorative frame to shops and bring goods closer to the shoppers’ attention. As well as screening unattractive areas of shopfloor, they are an attractive feature in their own right. They vary in height and style but are often at their best when panelled in timber with patterns containing a moulded skirting.
- 4.26 Long stretches of stallriser should be panelled to match the division of the windows and should include a strong sill. The height of the timber panel at the base of the doors should match. Pilaster bases can act as an indicator of height for stallrisers.

- 4.27 Stallrisers are prone to damage so the use of hard-wearing materials is important. Timber and stone facings are usually essential for traditional frontages. If brickwork is used, it should match the pattern of the nearby building or incorporate a design. Tiling should be selected with particular care and applied only where appropriate.
- 4.28 Pilasters also establish the pattern of a parade or terrace and are usually decorative elements which should not be removed or damaged. Projecting signs should not be mounted on pilasters and fascias should not project beyond or across them.

Blinds and Canopies

- 4.29 Planning permission is normally required to install a blind on a shop or building. In some cases replacement retractable blinds may not need permission, but it would be advisable to check with the planning department first.
- 4.30 Many traditional shopfronts have canopies or retractable blinds which add interest to the streetscene but also act as a shelter for shoppers and protect the shop display from the sun.
- 4.31 Retractable blinds and traditional roller blinds are generally acceptable where appropriate providing that they can easily be retracted into the blind box which is usually contained in a slot above the shopfront or incorporated into the cornice above the fascia. Fan canopies are usually acceptable in instances where they do not project too far forward of the fascia or shopfront. Fixed blinds which are usually constructed with a wood or metal frame covered with material may be acceptable in some cases. In traditional areas Dutch Blinds would not be acceptable, particularly as they are often intended merely to increase advertising space, either obliterating the fascia or in addition to it. Where a shopfront originally had a canopy or blind, strong consideration will be given to requiring it to be reinstated when a new shopfront is applied for. The number, shape and size of canopies used should relate to and emphasise the structural form of the shop unit. They should therefore suit the existing framework.



Long or large canopies which have an overwhelming effect on the streetscene would not be acceptable as a single canopy should not cross more than one single unit.



A retractable fan blind

- 4.32 In terms of materials, large shiny plastic canopies are undesirable. Colours should normally be subdued and blend in with the colour of the fascia. Advertisements and lettering on blinds may require advertisement consent and may be refused if they cause excessive clutter of adverts in shopping areas. If a blind is below the fascia, adverts are unnecessary.
- 4.33 Blinds projecting over public footways are also subject to control under the Highway Acts and it would therefore be advisable to contact the Highways Department at West Sussex County Council for further advice on the regulations.

Materials and Colour

- 4.34 Materials and colour should be carefully chosen. The quality and texture of materials of the adjoining buildings should influence choice. Wood is the most suitable material for the frames and fascias of shopfronts in conservation areas but modern materials can be used for new shopfront designs, in certain areas, in a matt finish.
- 4.35 Most modern shopfitters produce aluminium components which tend to look brash and obtrusive. If used, anodised or colour-coated aluminium would be preferable provided it is used in moderation. Where a proposed shopfront is adjacent to a traditional frontage, traditional materials will be required. Painted timber is the most preferred material as it is very versatile. Both soft and hard wood can be used.
- 4.36 The colour of the shopfront should harmonise with the rest of the building and the streetscene. Again the shopfront should not be seen as a separate entity but part of a

building and the streetscene. Colours should harmonise with upper floors and adjoining properties.

- 4.37 Corporate bodies tend to use certain base colours and “corporate colours”. These may not be appropriate to all situations and should respect the overall appearance of the setting; colours should enhance an area and not be loud, brash or garish.

5. Access for Disabled People

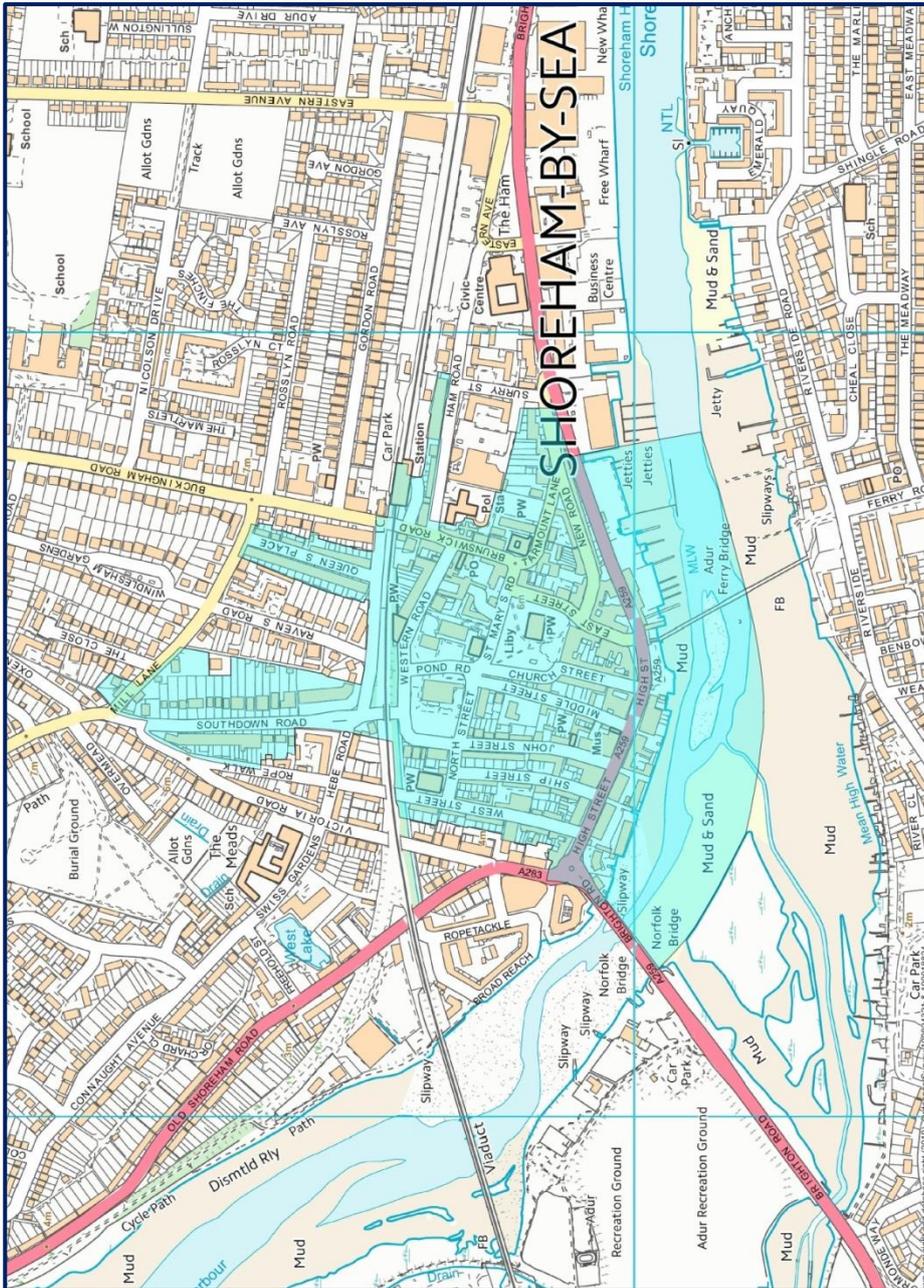
- 5.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty embodied in the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, The Disabled Persons Act 1981, the Equalities Act 2010, the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Building Regulations to ensure that anyone providing a building to which the public are admitted, make provision in the means of access, both to and within the building, for disabled people. Thus, in shopfront design, provision should be made for easy access and circulation within shops for disabled people. In most cases new standards on door widths can be imposed on new shopfronts or where a structural alteration which affects the means of escape is carried out.
- 5.2 Where new shopfronts are fitted, door entrances should be level and/or ramped and wide enough for a wheelchair to enter. There should be a minimum clear door opening of 0.800m with “flush” frontages. Where recessed doorways are proposed there should be a minimum width of 1.2m door opening and a door width of 0.840m. Stepped access should be avoided. Two-way swing doors are useful as it is sometimes easier to push the door open. Frameless glazed doors are useful as it is sometimes easier to push the door open. Frameless glazed doors are dangerous and should be clearly identifiable as wheelchairs can damage them.
- 5.3 When large areas of glass are used, where appropriate they should be indicated with coloured panels or signs on the door. Kicking plates should be provided and a visibility panel included in doors which are not made of glass. Features such as door handles and bells should be placed no more than 1m above the ground. Lever handles and slow self-closers make access easier for wheelchair bound customers. Sloping thresholds should have non-slip surfaces.
- 5.4 In any case, the building control officer should be contacted for further advice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR ADVICE PLEASE CONTACT THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Email: planning@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Email: building.control@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Appendix I



**Adur District Council
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**ADUR DISTRICT
COUNCIL**