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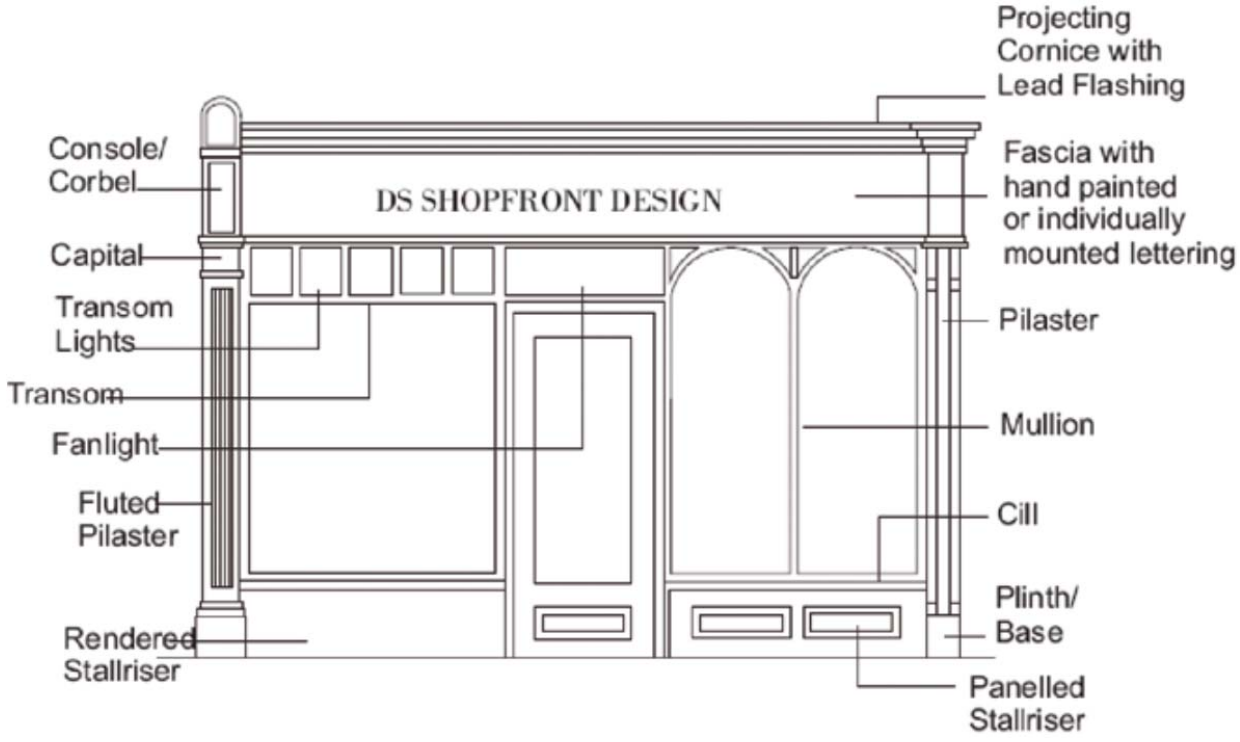
GUIDANCE NOTE –2 **SHOP FRONTS AND SIGNS**

- Well designed shop fronts and signs can enhance the shopping experience and strengthen the area's distinctive appeal. Corporate designs and signage may need to be adapted to avoid harm to the local identity.
- Where traditional shop fronts survive these should be retained even if the property is converted to a new use.
- Where replacement shop fronts are being proposed these should reflect the character and style of the upper floors and maintain the rhythm of the individual buildings.
- They should be well proportioned and detailed. Whether traditional or modern, they should incorporate a number of elements that contribute towards a well balanced shop front.



- Make sure the shop front is framed by using **pilasters** to identify the individual unit. They should have a heavier base to give solidity to the structure and have mouldings or panels applied to the pilaster. The top of the pilaster would traditionally have a decorative corbel.
- The signage space should be limited to a slim fascia. Ideally the fascia should not be deeper than ¼ of the height from pavement level to the bottom of the fascia. The fascia should not extend uninterrupted across more than one building. It is important that the fascia has a projecting a cornice along the top edge.

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- The shop front needs to be have a 'top' formed by a strong visual projecting **cornice.** This feature also provides weather protection by throwing rainwater clear of the frontage. The cornice should be capped in lead.
- The **stallriser** helps to visually anchor the shop front to the ground and provide weather protection. They may be panelled timber, tile, brick, stone or painted render.
- Make sure that the **doors** are split to reflect the height of the stallriser if possible and recessed with a tiled/stone threshold.
- Avoid overly large panes of glass and use **windows** subdivided by glazing bars.
- Traditional **blinds** must be retractable and fixed canopies or Dutch blinds must be avoided. Even if a blind is considered acceptable the position of the blind box needs careful consideration and should be positioned neatly above the fascia or be designed to be an integral part of the shopfront.
- Consider **security measures** at the design stage and promote the use of laminated glass or internal lattice grilles. External roller shutters must be avoided.
- New shop fronts must be fully **accessible** wherever possible. Doors should have a minimum opening of 850mm and be flush with the footpath. Door furniture should be no higher than 1 metre above floor level and frameless glazed doors avoided.
- Timber is the traditional **material** for shop fronts and will be required in conservation areas and on listed buildings and the use of upvc and aluminium shop fronts should be resisted here. On modern buildings or, on schemes that offer a simpler and more contemporary approach an aluminium shopfront may be acceptable. A painted finish is more appropriate to a stained finish. The choice of **colour** offers much scope for improving the street scene.
- **Advertisements and signs** should always be designed to complement the appearance of the shop front, building and character of the area. Fascia signs should be slim and not be a dominant feature of the frontage. They look better set within a sub-frame especially if they are deep. Avoid shiny plastic signs and use a matt finish. Hanging signs offer a more traditional approach and add interest and individuality to the street scene. **Lighting** can be hidden in the projecting cornice or using slim pelmet or trough lights. **Lettering** should be kept to a minimum and be relative to the size of the fascia. Where a traditional fascia does not exist, lettering applied to the glass window may be acceptable. Hand painted or stencilled signs always look the best although individually applied lettering may also be acceptable.

Further information – HPBC - A Design Guide for Shop Fronts - A Design Guide for Signs