

PENICUIK SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE















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This Guide has been produced as part of the Penicuik Townscape Heritage (TH) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) to improve the attractiveness of the town centre and enhance its architectural and historic character. Penicuik has a unique history, evidenced by the many historic buildings with their interesting shop fronts which are now in need of enhancement to bring back character and vitality to the street.



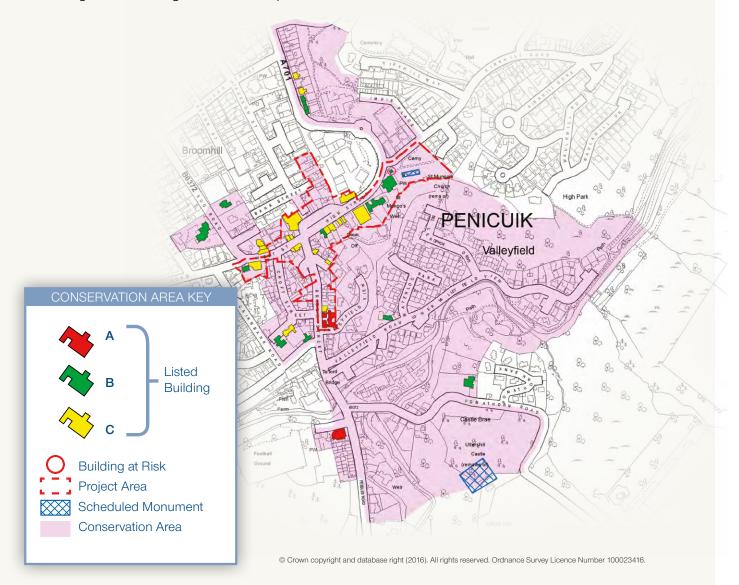
Introduction

The purpose of this Guide is to promote and encourage good shop front and advertisement design in the centre of

Penicuik. It sets out the general approach that should be adopted when considering alterations to existing shop fronts and new shop fronts and advertisements.

These guidelines are not rules. Inventiveness is still necessary to achieve a good design. In recent decades many of the shop fronts in the centre of Penicuik have been altered with unsympathetic fascias, signage and advertisements which are having an adverse impact on the character of the High Street, Bridge Street, the Square,

West Street and John Street. The Penicuik
Townscape Heritage (TH) and Conservation Area
Regeneration Scheme (CARS) has highlighted
this as an issue and grants are available to
improve shop fronts. This Guide has been
produced to assist owners/tenants and their
agents/designers to improve shop fronts in the
town centre. The commercial centre of Penicuik
is part of the Conservation Area and many of the
traditional buildings are listed as architecturally
and historically important. A number of
planning policies as set out in Midlothian Local
Development Plan 2017 therefore apply to the
area (see appendix for details).

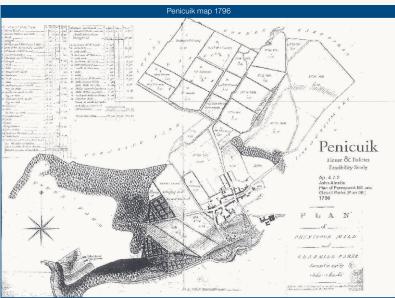


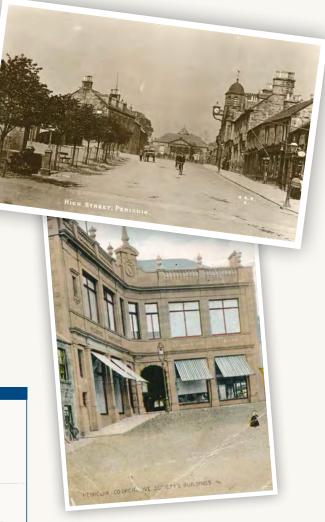
Shop fronts in Penicuik

The distinctive shop fronts and lettering in Penicuik High Street, The Square, Bridge Street, Croft Street and some of West Street and John Street are a legacy of Penicuik's past significance as a market town and local service centre.

The town was laid out by Sir James Clerk of Penicuik in the 1770s. Local shops and businesses grew up in the town to serve the local residents working in the paper making industry.

During the 19th century the mill-owning Cowan family became a major influence in town life, erecting buildings and participating in everything from printing and religion, to the founding of a local library.





The town centre has a dual identity. The High Street, The Square, Bridge Street, Croft Street and West Street follow the original street pattern laid out in the 1770's, whilst the pedestrianisation of John Street has added late 20th century retail, commercial architecture to the town.



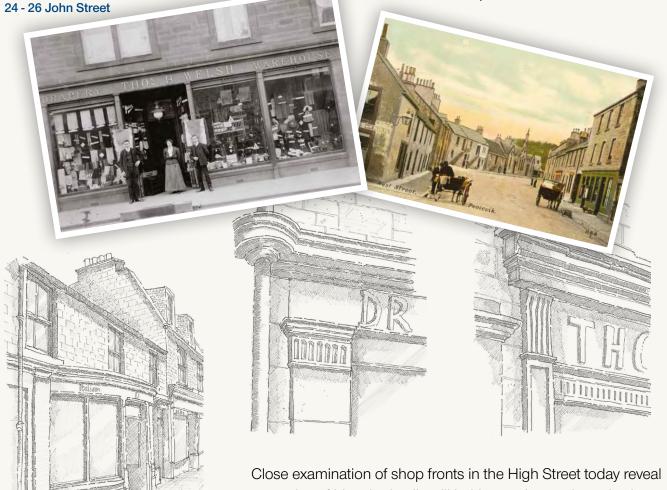
Signs were often painted directly onto the building, often relatively modestly and relating to architectural features such as string courses. 5-7 High Street is a nice example of a late 18th century bow window frontage. The latter half of the 19th century saw the development of much bolder display windows. The use of cast iron allowed larger spans and the development and availability of plate glass encouraged quite large windows (see 24-26 John Street, below). The supports and glazing were usually carefully integrated. Doorways were often recessed and stall risers formed an important composition. Fascia's reflected the structure over the shop front and often included quite elaborate projecting cornices frequently with scrolled consol brackets at each end. Many old photographs taken in the early 20th century of the High Street, Bridge Street and The Square shops give a good indication of the richness of later 19th century shop front design.

5 - 7 High Street



15 - 23 High Street

The original streets still have the remains of traditional shop fronts which tend to have narrow fronts, frequently built with commercial units on the ground floor with living accommodation above. Due to the limitations of construction techniques, earlier shops often had quite domestic sized openings with thick masonry piers serving to support the building above. 15-23 High Street is an example of this.



Close examination of shop fronts in the High Street today reveal examples of historic details still lurking under modern plastic fascia and signage.

Recent Developments and the Decline of Shop Front Design

Shop front design has changed dramatically over the last fifty years or so. As retailing methods have changed, so have the ways in which shop fronts present those changes.

Changing methods of displaying and selling goods and the availability of new materials such as sheet plastics, laminates, aluminum and plate glass coupled with the decline in carpentry and joinery skills have contributed to the changes in style and design.

Basic rules of scale and proportion are often ignored in using new construction methods. For example:

- The use of steel girders has meant that the whole of the ground floor can be removed and set back without visual means of support to the upper floors.
- When higher ground floors have been fitted with false ceilings, the fascia has often become too deep for the building when extended downwards to cover the space between.

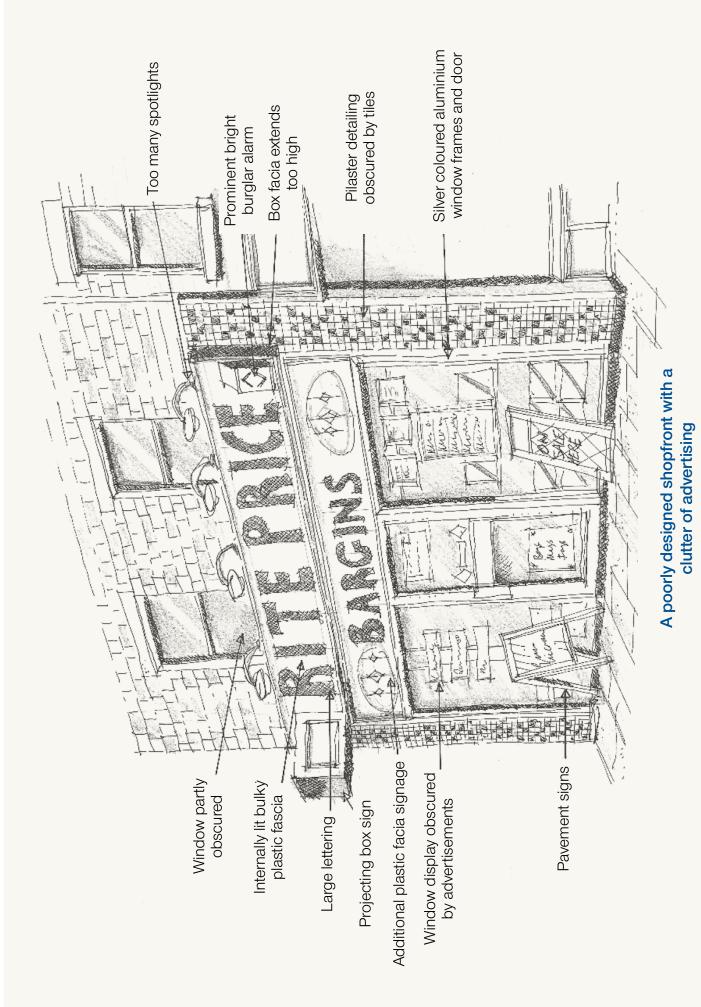
Such alterations to shop front design, coupled with a profusion of external lighting results in a brighter or brasher appearance. Retailers compete for attention and bigger signs with large lettering and more lighting has the cumulative result of visual clutter.

Shop front security can also adversely affect the appearance of the street if it involves the addition of steel shutters and grills.

The general change in the standard of shop front design has also resulted from changing lifestyles and business practices.

Penicuik is fortunate in that there still remains a tradition of residential accommodation in flats above the shops in the town centre. There has been a steady decline in local retail businesses and small shops. The changing face of retail with large out of town stores with huge car parks has resulted in a decline of trade in the High Street.

To arrest this decline and bring back quality and vitality to the town centres so that it can offer something special in terms of character and interest, it is vital that shop front design is improved.



The Principles of Good Shop Front Design

Good design enhances the shop front, makes a positive contribution to the street scene and improves retail operations.

Examples of Shop Front restoration in Dalkeith







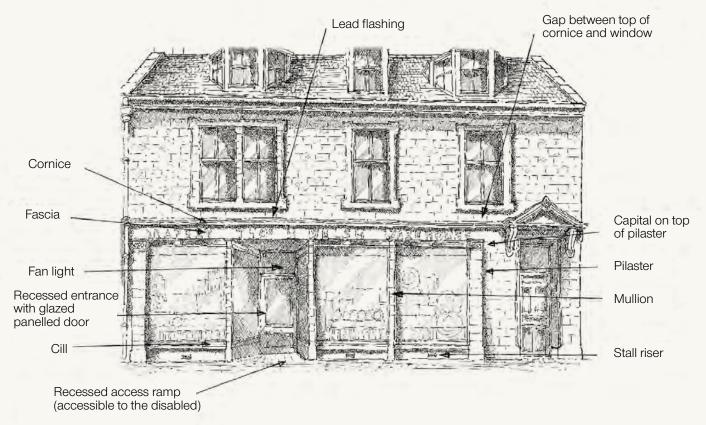
To design successful new shop fronts it is necessary to take into consideration the ten principles that are set out below.

- 1 All work should preserve and enhance the character of Penicuik Conservation Area.
- 2 The use of quality traditional materials is expected, particularly for listed and traditional buildings.
- 3 Shop front design should be based on research into the historic shop front relating to the specific building and be related to the composition of the building as a whole.
- 4 Proportions should reflect the historic proportions of the building.
- 5 Aluminum or other "standard" shop front systems that do not respect the historic pattern of bays, recesses and the like are not acceptable, particularly for listed and traditional buildings.
- 6 Over large fascias that are out of scale with adjoining fascias or obscure the shop window will not be acceptable.
- 7 Fascia signs should sit neatly within the fascia, clear of any framing detail. Boldly projecting box like fascia signs will not be acceptable.
- 8 Where separate buildings have been amalgamated at ground floor level into one unit, the shop fronts should be kept separate with strong vertical divisions between the buildings.
- Where two or more shop units occupy the same shop frontage in the same building, the shop front design should not fragment the frontage.
- In all cases the intention should be to encourage individuality and distinctiveness in a manner that will reflect the diverse range of architectural and historic qualities that exist in the town centre yet also provide a high quality continuum of shop front design.



Examples of good Shop Front Design

Various elements can be used to enclose the shop window and entrance rather like a picture frame which sets off a painting. These include the pilaster, fascia, cornice and stall riser. Each has its own visual and practical function and these are explained below.

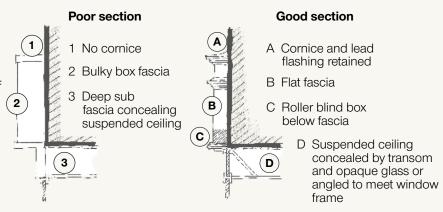


Details of a well designed shopfront

Fascia

Most shop fronts incorporate a fascia to display the name and/or type of shop.

- The scale and design of the fascia should be appropriate to the character, height and period of the building and in proportion with the design of the shop front.
- be kept well below the first floor window cills leaving a suitable margin. The bottom of the fascia should not extend down too far in proportion to the rest of the shop front, nor cover up architectural detail. Applied fascia boards should not hide original details.

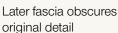


Good and poor fascia sections

- Where excessively deep fascias have been introduced in the past, their overall height should be reduced to expose, where practical, the wall surface below.
- Where a false ceiling is being or has been inserted within the shop, it will not be appropriate merely to increase the fascia depth in conjunction with it. This should be treated as a separate element below the fascia.
- A common fascia should not run through several distinct elevations, even where they are occupied by the same business. Conversely where two users occupy the ground floor of a single building the shop front and fascias should be broadly coordinated.
- Original fascia detailing should be retained and/or reinstated wherever possible.
- As a general rule new applied fascias should be in timber. The signing and positioning of the fascia should be such that it reads as an integral part of the building façade.









Original fascia exposed





Cornice

The cornice provides a necessary and attractive break between the shop front and the building façade and by throwing water clear of the shop front can prevent decay.

 Original cornices and freezes should be retained, revealed, or restored. A structural or applied cornice projection is required as part of nearly every shop front design.

Console/Corbels

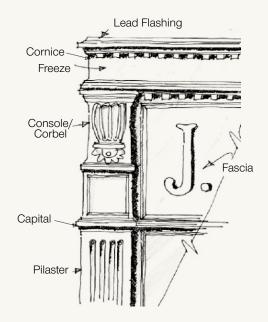
In Victorian shop fronts the capital at the head of the pilaster was often elaborated to form a console bracket extending outside the fascia to support a distinctive cornice. The bracket was often uniform in width on the front, the sides curved in the form of an upright "S" with the bottom curve smaller than the upper curve.

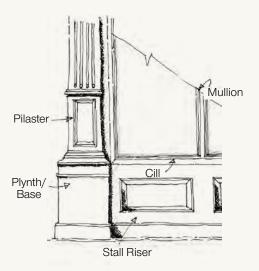
 Original console brackets should be retained, revealed, or restored.

Pilasters

The pilasters are the shallow piers or columns which project slightly from the wall of each side of a shop front. The pilasters provide visual and physical support to the fascia with which they form a type of picture frame containing the shop front. Traditional pilasters usually have a wider base on a plinth at the bottom and a decorative capital to the top.

- Original pilasters should be retained, revealed, or restored. In Penicuik some of the older shop fronts have masonry surrounds with stone divisions as part of the shop front giving fairly narrow openings. The details around the stone piers and surrounds are often quite simple but distinctive, and add to the proportion and character of the building i.e. carved indents in the stone reveals.
- Original details such as carved indents in stone piers and shop surrounds should be retained/restored and enhanced wherever possible.



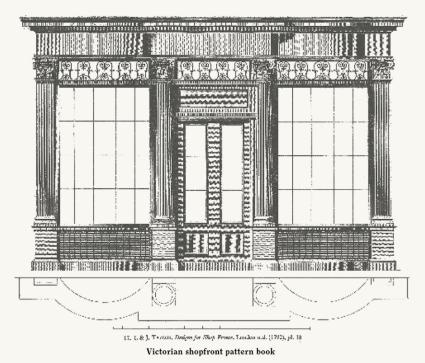




Stallrisers

The stallriser is a vital component of the traditional shop front. $\ensuremath{\mid} t$

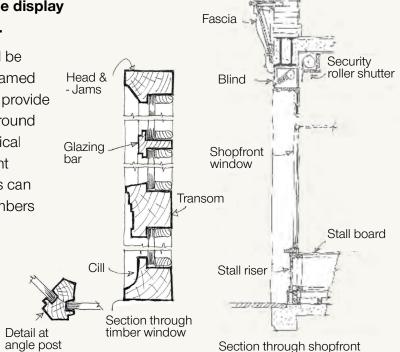
gives protection to the base of the shop window from splash or damage and provides the building with a visual anchor to the ground. They are traditionally constructed of stone (generally ashlar or polished) render or panelled timber, although brick is sometimes found. Victorian shop fronts, most notably butchers and public houses, also used decorative tiles. These should be retained even where the shop name is changed.



Windows

One of the most important visual elements of the shop front is the large window area for the display of goods and the attraction of customers.

- Very large individual areas of glass should be avoided and windows ideally should be framed and subdivided vertically. Plate glass may provide a horizontal emphasis to the building at ground floor level resulting in conflict with the vertical character of upper floors. The main upright posts (mullions) which subdivide the glass can often be supplemented by horizontal members (transoms) or other slim glazing bars.
- Windows should normally be set in the same plane as the front of the building.
 Recesses should generally be limited to the shop entrance.



Window Display

The shop front provides the framework for displaying goods. The method of display is crucial not only for attracting the customer but also creating a lively street atmosphere.

 Shop windows should not be obscured by a proliferation of advertisements, stickers or coloured film. Some enterprises such as building societies, banks and bookmakers do not normally display goods and an imaginative approach to window display will help to avoid the deadening effect such units can have on the street.

Doors

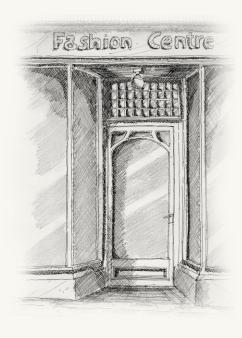
The entrance gives an important first impression of the shop itself. A recessed doorway has the effect of inviting shoppers in, it also gives relief in the frontage and helps to break down the scale of the shop front.

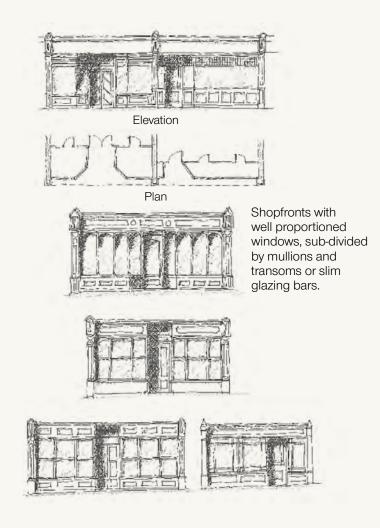
- Existing original doors or traditional panelled doors should be retained, while the design of the new shop doors must reflect the design of the shop front and windows.
- The door should generally have a kick plate or bottom panel of a height to match the stall riser. The door and window frame should usually be constructed of the same material and painted the same colour.



A fan light is a window over the door which can resemble an open fan in design.

 The fan light should be correct in style for the original date and character of the shop front.





Metalwork

Existing traditional metal fittings, such as letter boxes, door plates, handles, boot scrapers etc. should be retained and new door furniture should be chosen to match the style of the shop front.

Forecourts

The display of goods or signs on forecourts gives the street a cluttered appearance and also causes problems to disabled people using the premises, especially the visually impaired.

 The use of forecourts for advertisement signs or display should be discouraged.

Paving and Access for the Disabled

If the shop door is recessed it is important to make sure the paved area in front is carefully designed. As well as taking into account the colour and materials which blend in with the shop front, it is necessary to consider access for the disabled.

 Disabled access is desirable and can normally be achieved without detriment to the design of the shop front. As a general rule steps should be avoided and the entrance ramp to the shop should be surfaced in a non slip material.
 Dimensions must comply with the Equalities Act 2010 and other relevant legislation.

Materials

Much of the character of Penicuik Conservation Area is derived from the mellowed appearance of traditional materials such as stone, slate and timber.

- Materials should be chosen to conform with the historic character of the area and with the building above, or where suitable to each side.
- The range of materials in use in the historic area should not be indiscriminately increased. Modern materials such as plastics and modernised or plastic coated metals are generally unsympathetic when viewed in combination with natural materials and should be avoided where possible.

Timber and stone are the dominant materials in the centre of Penicuik. Timber is a versatile material, it is durable and repainting can freshen up or change the appearance of a shop front at a minimum cost. Painted timber is generally preferable to stained hardwood.

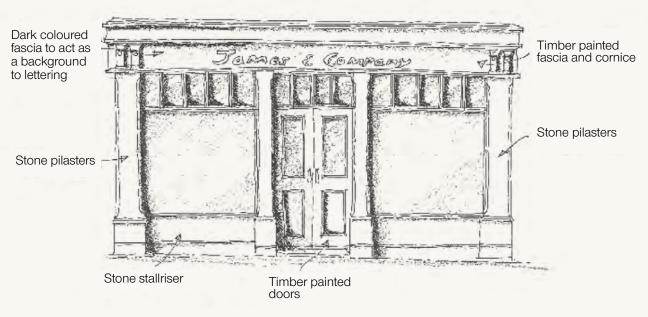
Colour

Colour schemes should harmonise with the remainder of the building and the street scheme.

Colour can be used to emphasis important elements of the structure and design and at the same time pick out detail. Garish colour combinations should be avoided.

Contemporary Designs

The emphasis so far has been on traditional elements of design. Contemporary designs can be successful if high quality materials are used with careful regard to the proportions and scale of the building. This approach is usually most appropriate in contemporary buildings but can work in an historic setting if care is taken by the designer relating the design to the style and detailing of the building. Care must be taken so that the scheme does not undermine the visual unity of the building and damage the appearance.



Advertisements and Signage

Whilst commercial premises need to provide the public with the name and goods and services available, there is also a desire to attract attention. Often the simpler message the greater the impact. An excessive amount of advertising material causes a cluttered and unsightly appearance, which can often be counter productive. The fascia is the prime place for displaying advertising material and unnecessary duplication of the message in other forms of advertisement should be avoided if possible.



- The use of quality traditional materials is expected, particularly for listed and traditional buildings (hand painted signs are very effective).
- Plastic and plastic coated or highly reflective materials and garish colours will not normally be acceptable, particularly for listed and traditional buildings.
- Easy to read, well proportional lettering with imaginative signs and symbols and a contrast between lettering and background, is the most effective advertising.
- Over-large fascias or hanging signs or letters that are out of scale with adjoining fascias or obscure the shop window will not normally be acceptable.
- Fascia signs should sit neatly within the fascia, clear of any framing detail. Boldly projecting box-like fascia signs will not normally be acceptable.
- Internally illuminated signs will not be acceptable.
- Wall-mounted or hanging signs above fascia level are only acceptable if they can be satisfactorily accommodated without obscuring architectural features and are of the highest quality.
- Where two or more shop units occupy the same shop frontage in the same building, the signage and colour schemes should not fragment the frontage. Simple changes in the colour or style of individually applied lettering within the fascia and/or hanging signs can be effective here.

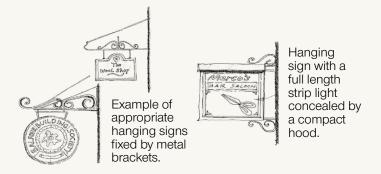
 Generally, keep signage to a minimum and avoid unnecessary stickers and posters.

Lighting

Shop fronts in the town centre do not need special lighting as the level of street lighting is adequate.

- Box fascias internally illuminated are not acceptable. Plastic and aluminum box fascias almost invariably project forward of the main face of the building, in a bulky and unsightly manner.
- Lighting should preferably be contained within shop windows, focusing on the display of goods rather than shop frontages.
- Spotlights well designed and carefully located can be acceptable but great care is needed to avoid lighting units that appear unsightly in the daylight and interfere with traffic. Rows of spotlights above a fascia are unacceptable.

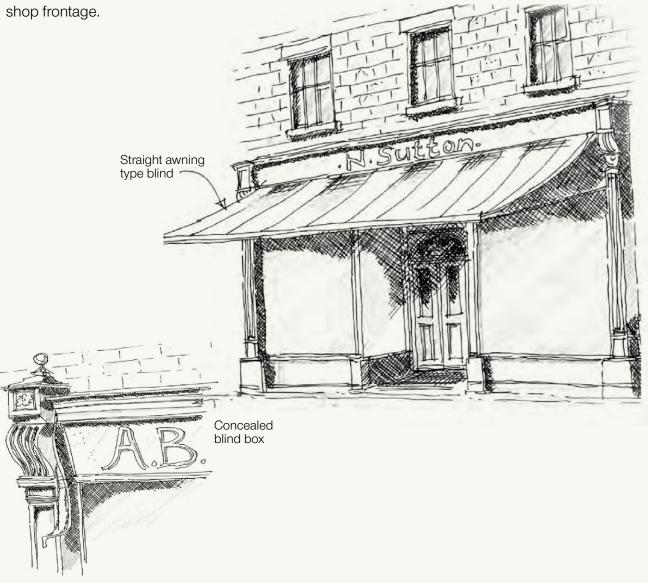
Any external lighting should be discretely designed with particular sensitivity to the streetscape character of the area.



Blinds & Canopies

The traditional shop blind is the straight awning type, mounted on a roller supported by brackets. When not in use it was virtually invisible, concealed in a blind box designed carefully as part of the fascia.

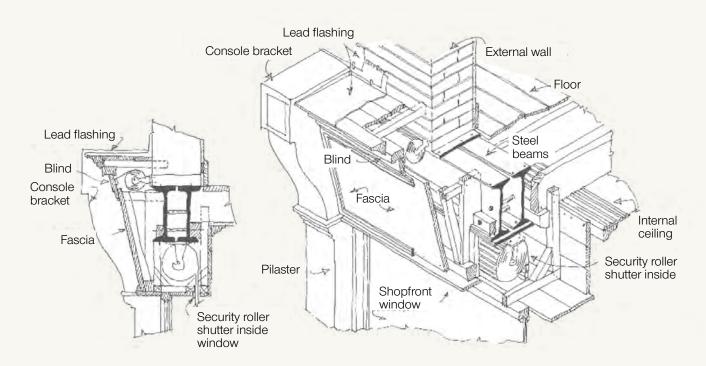
- Original canvas style retractable canopy blinds should, where appropriate be retained and/or reinstated.
- New canopy blinds, where considered necessary, should be designed in a similar traditional style and should not be garishly coloured. The blind should extend across the whole width of the shop frontage and its assembly mechanism should form an integral part of the overall design and detailing of the
- Dutch style blinds which are unretractable are unacceptable. These tend to be curved in sections and cannot be concealed successfully in a blind box, consequently they are rarely folded back and tend to be permanently fixed down often obscuring traditional details.



Security

Care should be taken when considering security measures for the shop. Solid external security shutters are not acceptable. They require a permanent bulky housing attached to the fascia which is unsightly and when rolled down they give the street a deadening effect which can encourage crime.

- Where security is considered necessary this should be achieved by the use of laminated or toughened glass or transparent metal grills. Fixed type transparent metal grills which are usually located on the outside of the shop window should be fully demountable so that they can be removed during shop opening hours. Rolling type transparent metal grills which allow clear visibility into the shop can also be used but these should incorporate a well concealed roller mechanism and should preferably be located on the inside of the shop windows.
- Alarms are usually best mounted on the fascia. They should be carefully located to avoid obscuring architectural details. In some cases the colour may have to be painted out to blend with the background.



Section through shopfront fascia

Cut away view of shopfront fascia

10 Easy Steps to Design and Restore Shop fronts in Penicuik

Step 1

Think carefully about what you want to do in terms of display and attracting customers into the shop. Consider appointing an architect or designer to draw up a proposal and specification.

Step 2

Do a careful survey of the existing shop front, noting all the details. Are there any historic details remaining that need to be restored? Look at old photographs, records and archives to see if there are historic features that could be reinstated if lost. The Penicuik Archive is managed by the Penicuik Historical Society.

Step 3

Look carefully at the upper floors of the building and the adjoining buildings each side. Stand back and look from across the street at the building elevation. The shop front design should take account of the detailing and proportion of the overall building and neighbouring buildings so that the character of the street scene is considered. Part of the survey should include drawings/elevations of the building with its immediate neighbours. This will immediately help to confirm how the proposals visually affect the street.

Step 4

Think about the display of goods in the shop front taking into account historic details, window divisions and signs and the need to present an interesting inviting image to the customer and at the same time enhancing the appearance of the street.

Step 5

Prepare initial sketch design and discuss with Midlothian Council Planning Services the need for planning permission, advertisement consent or listed building consent. Also contact the Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project Manager to discuss the possibility of grant aid (this will depend upon the building being identified for assistance within

the TH/CARS area). It would also be desirable if you discussed your ideas with other owners in the building block i.e. flats above and with adjoining owners. This will help to develop good neighbour relations.

Step 6

Finalise the design after the above discussions and submit the relevant applications for approval.

Step 7

Once the scheme is approved think carefully about the contractor to do the work. If the scheme is grant eligible, three competitive quotations will be needed for the work. If the scheme includes historic restoration and detail joinery work then a contactor will have to have the necessary expertise, skill and experience to implement this.

Step 8

Appoint a contractor and, if appropriate, a suitably qualified conservation professional, to monitor the work and to ensure that the scheme is implemented in accordance with the approved drawings. If unforeseen issues come up on site and the design needs to be amended discuss this with the Planning Servicesand also the Heritage Regeneration Project Manager if the scheme is subject to grant aid. The Heritage Regeneration Project Manager will check that grant aided work is carried out in accordance with the conditions of the grant.

Step 9

If the scheme is a success and you are proud of the work, share the experience with others, it could be used as an example of good practice.

Step 10

Reflect on the process and discuss with the Heritage Regeneration Project Manager any issues that you feel need to be raised to improve the situation for other shop front improvement schemes.

Appendix

The following policies taken from the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017 are relevant to the design of shop fronts in Penicuik town centre.

ENV19 Conservation Areas

Within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, development will not be permitted which would have any adverse effect on its character and appearance. In assessing proposals, regard will be had to any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

New buildings, extensions and alterations

In the selection of site, scale, choice of materials and design, new buildings, and extensions and alterations to existing buildings, must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Materials appropriate to the locality or structure affected, will be used in new building, extensions or alterations. Care in the design of replacement windows and doors will be required on the public frontage of buildings.

Demolition

Demolition to facilitate new development of part or all of a building or structure that makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can be shown that:

- A. the structural condition of the building is such that it cannot be adapted without material loss to its character to accommodate the proposal; and
- B. the Conservation Area will be enhanced as a result of the redevelopment of the site; and
- C. there is no alternative location physically capable of accommodating the proposed development.

Where demolition of any building or other structure within a Conservation Area is proposed, it must be demonstrated that there are acceptable proposals for the immediate future use of the site which enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Detailed plans for an acceptable replacement building must be in receipt of planning permission before Conservation Area Consent will be granted for demolition and redevelopment. Conditions will be applied to the planning permission to ensure that demolition does not take place in advance of the letting of a contract for the carrying out of a replacement building or alternative means of treating the cleared site having been agreed.

These requirements may not apply in circumstances where the building is of no architectural or historic value, makes no material contribution to the Conservation Area, and where its early removal would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

ENV22 Listed Buildings

Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect the character or appearance of a listed building, its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest.

New Development

Development within the curtilage of a listed building or its setting will only be permitted where it complements its special architectural or historical character.

Enabling Development

New development used to fund the restoration of a listed building may be acceptable where:

- A. the proposed development is in the vicinity of the listed building whose restoration it is proposed to enable; and
- B. it is demonstrated that such development is the only means of retaining the listed building and other options for funding have been exhausted;
 and
- C. it is demonstrated that the scale of the proposed development represents the minimum necessary to enable the listed building's conservation and reuse (with independent verification of the development costs*); and
- D. the resulting development is of a high quality design that respects the listed building and its setting.

Demolition

Demolition will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where:

- A. the proposed demolition is of an addition to the building which is of little architectural or historic value and its removal would result in an improvement to the quality of the original building; or
- B. there is an overriding requirement in the public interest to allow the redevelopment of the site, the proposed use cannot physically be accommodated elsewhere, and the listed building is incapable of adaptation without material loss to its character or appearance; or
- C. it is demonstrated to the Council's satisfaction that the repair of the building is not economically viable and that every effort has been made to find a party with the willingness and means to acquire and restore the building*; and, in any of these cases;
- D. there are approved plans for the future development of the site and agreement has been reached on the timescale for demolition and redevelopment.

Extensions and Alterations

Proposals for extensions and/ or alterations to a listed building will only be permitted where their siting, scale, design, materials and detailing do not detract from, and wherever appropriate enhance, the original character of the building.

Change of Use

The change of use of a listed building will only be permitted where it can be shown that the proposed use and any necessary alteration can be achieved without detriment to the character, appearance and setting of the building.

^{*} In circumstances involving proposed demolition or enabling development where financial viability is an issue, it is the responsibility of the applicant/ developer to bring to the attention of the Council any issue that they consider relevant. The Council reserves the right to base its decision on satisfactory evidence to that effect through an open book process.

References

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Scottish Borders Council	Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance on Shop Fronts and Shop Signs.



Thanks and Acknowledgements

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Shop fronts in Penicuik and the lettering that went with them.

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