

This Design Guide is a revised version of a draft document which was made available for public discussion and comment between 10th. July 1991 and 11th. November 1991.

It was approved on 20th. January 1994 by the Development Control Committee for the purposes of advice and guidance for development control following advertisement and consultations.



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Design Guide 3

SHOPFRONTS

OGWR BOROUGH COUNCIL GUIDES TO DESIGN



FOREWORD

This series of guides to design prepared by the Borough Council has three main aims. They are:

- 1. To make clear the Local Planning Authority's expectations for the design of development.**
- 2. To encourage, as a consequence, development of a high design standard that will result in a benefit in environmental and-landscape terms.**
- 3. To reduce the need for revision of the design of proposals, and thus to increase the speed of the determination of planning applications.**

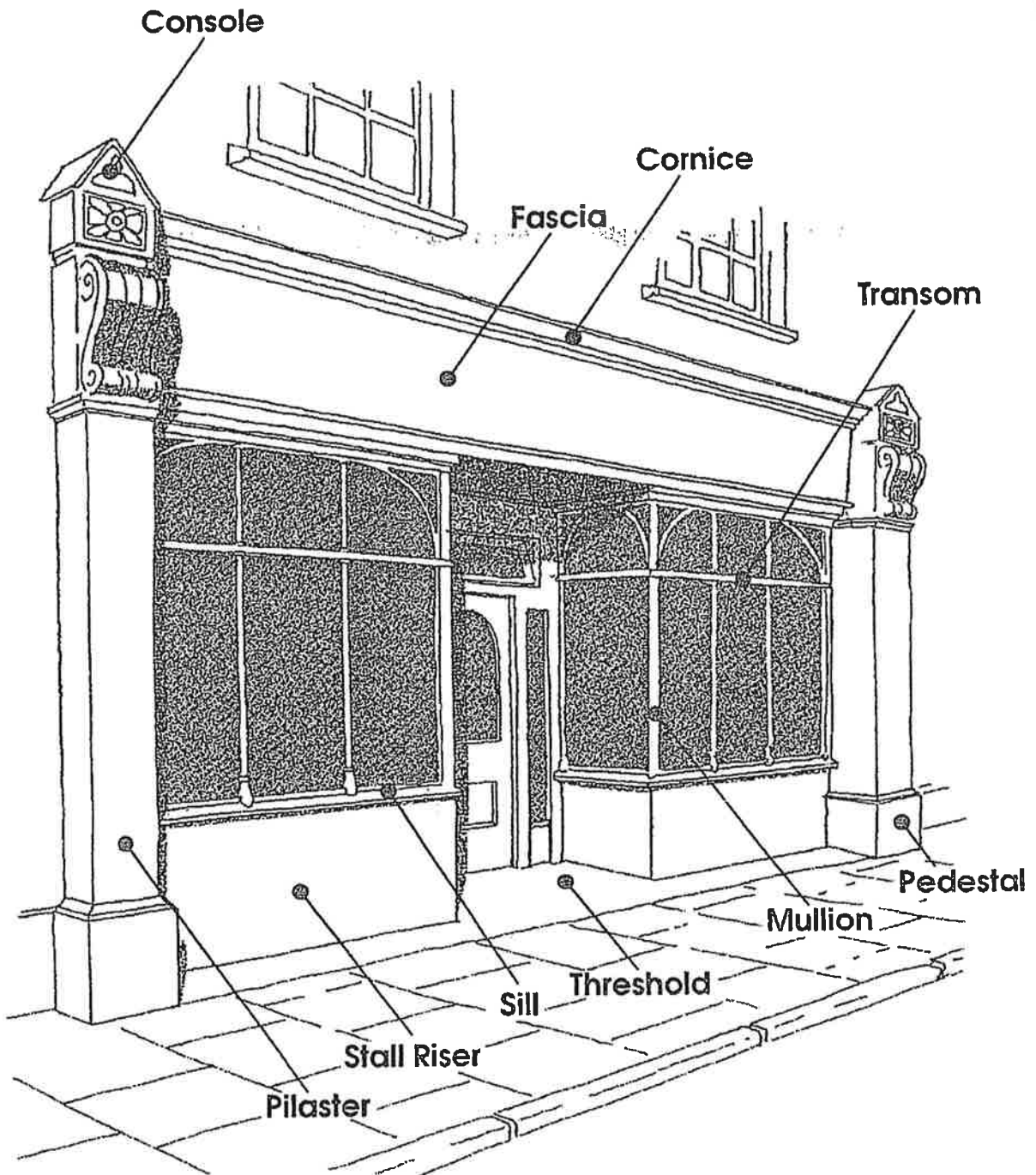
Five secondary aims clarify the criteria for judging the benefit that may be achieved by the design of a development.
Those secondary aims of the design advice are:

- A. To create a positive area image, a sense of local identity.**
- B. To ensure the integration of development into the surrounding area.**
- C. To ensure the protection, and preferably enhancement, of the landscape or the townscape.**
- D. To ensure the protection or enhancement of the appearance or character of areas of special interest or character.**
- E. To ensure the protection or enhancement of the residential amenity of people living in the vicinity of, or who will live in, a development.**

SHOPFRONTS

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PARTS OF THE SHOPFRONT

Design Guide 3

SHOPFRONTS

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. This guide is one of a series produced by Ogwr Borough Council. It is about new and replacement shopfronts. The Council believes that better designed shopfronts will improve the appearance, character and quality of shopping areas. Such an improvement is of value to traders, who can gain custom, and to everyone else, who can enjoy the more attractive surroundings. The guide applies to all shopping areas in the Borough but it is particularly relevant to the design of the shopfronts in conservation areas and the commercial improvement areas.

1.2. The aims of the design guide series are set out in the foreword. Within these general aims there are ten specific objectives of this particular guide. They are:

- a. *To encourage more thoughtful design of new shop buildings and thereby improve the visual quality of shopping streets.*
(See Advice Notes 1 & 2).
 - b. *To encourage the preservation of good period shopfronts.*
(See Advice Note 3).
 - c. *To ensure new shopfronts relate satisfactorily to the shop building and the street as a whole.*
(See Advice Notes 4 - 9).
 - d. *To encourage provision of access for the disabled.*
(See Advice Note 10).
 - e. *To retain and improve access to the upper floors of the shop building.*
(See Advice Note 11).
 - f. *To ensure that advertising is integrated with the shopfront and that it respects the character of its surroundings.*
(See Advice Notes 12 & 13).
 - g. *To encourage the integration of security devices with the design of the shopfront.*
(See Advice Note 14).
 - h. *To limit the spread of visually disruptive canopies and awnings.*
(See Advice Note 15).
 - i. *To discourage the inappropriate imposition of national corporate image shopfronts.*
(See Advice Note 16).
 - j. *To encourage imaginative and innovative shopfront design.*
(See Advice Note 17).
- 1.4. The advice notes set out in this Guide are largely based on lessons from Victorian shopfronts. They have the large display windows and opportunities for advertising needed by modern retailers together with the character and solidity that enhance the appearance of the street. They also have a style that is compatible with the many older shop buildings that still remain in the commercial areas.
- 1.5. Although all new shop fronts require planning consent, it is intended that these aims should be achieved mainly by persuasion. In accord with Government advice, however, control over the design of a proposal will be exercised if justified by the sensitive character of the area or of the particular building. Sensitive areas are the Conservation Areas and Commercial Improvement Areas. A particular building may be sensitive if its scale or location makes it a prominent feature of the environment, or if it is listed, or if it forms part of the setting of a listed building. In other circumstances proposals will only be rejected if their design is obviously poor, out of scale or character with their surroundings.

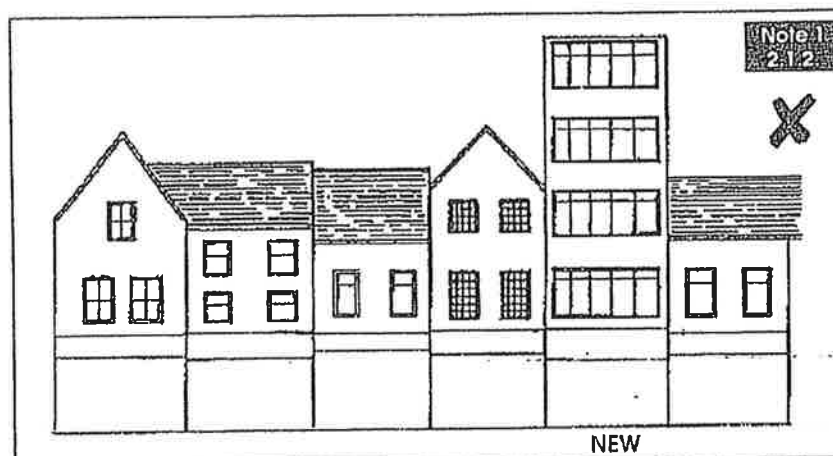
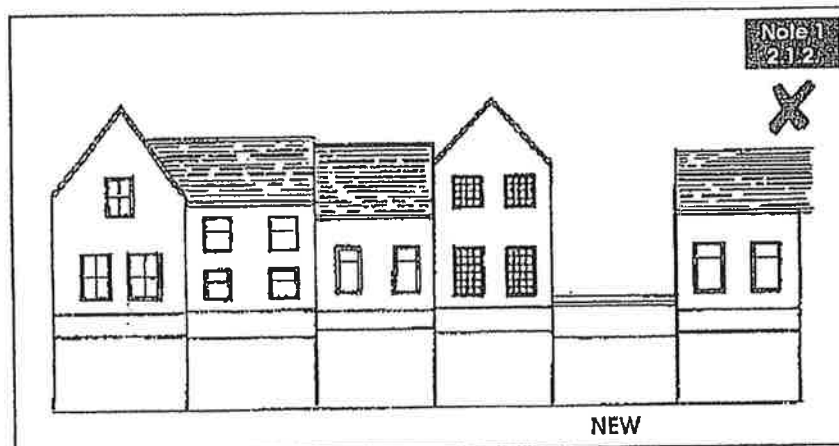
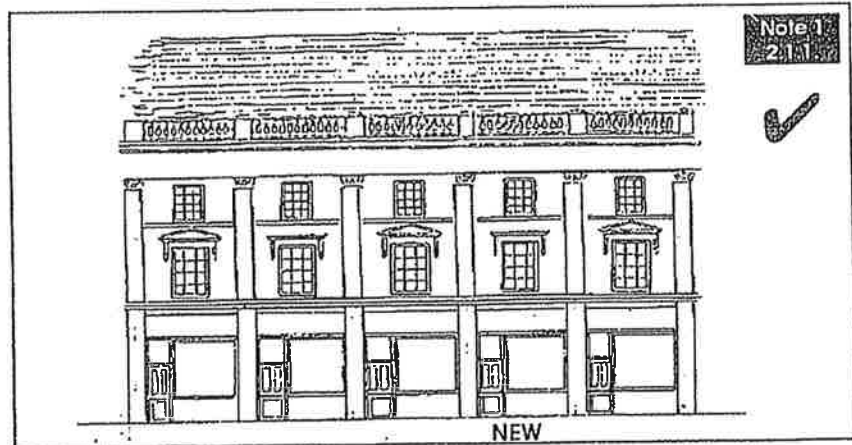
2. ADVICE NOTES

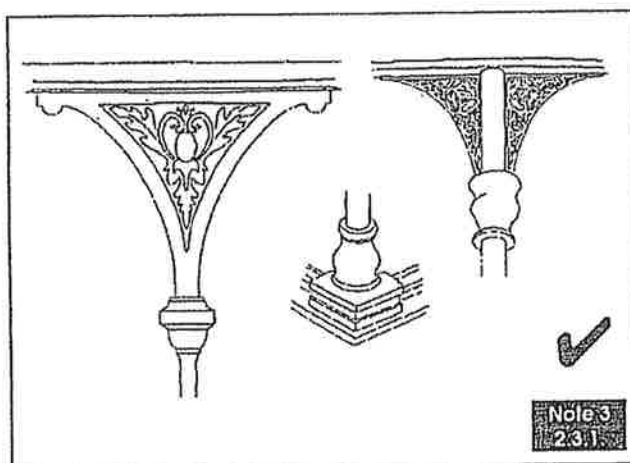
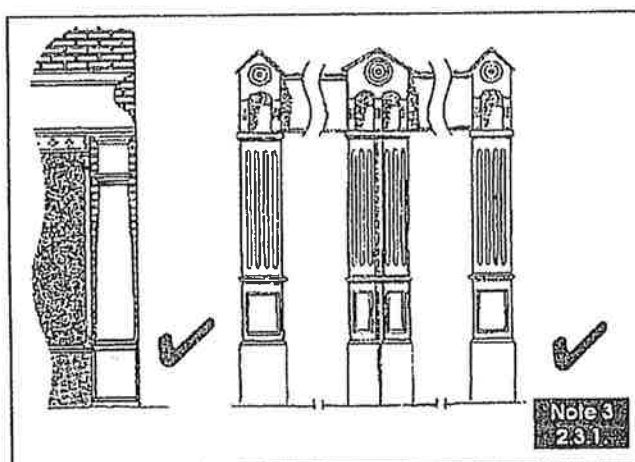
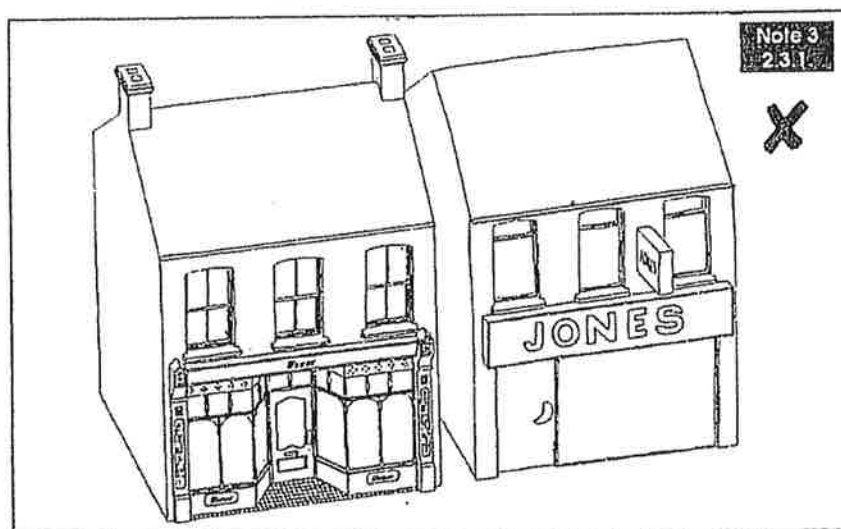
2.1. Note 1: New shop buildings should have a scale of form and detail appropriate to their setting and to the distance from which they will be seen.

2.1.1. When a new shop building is added to a shopping area it should be consciously designed to strengthen local identity and to enhance the attractiveness of the area as a whole. Very occasionally this may be achieved by reproducing the exact style and form of neighbouring building, although this is likely to be appropriate only when filling a gap in an architecturally and historically important cohesive group of buildings. If it is decided to copy adjoining buildings it is most important that the reproduction be carried out with close attention to detail. A poorly detailed and unconvincing copy may jar against its neighbours more than a frankly different, but harmonising design.

2.1.2. In existing groups of more varied design, or of less significant architectural quality, a harmonising design will be the more usual way of strengthening local identity. The height of the infilling building should relate to its neighbours. A new building which is too low will create a 'gap-tooth' appearance in the street frontage. A building that is too tall will dwarf its surroundings. While the former will rarely enhance the environment there are rare occasions when a tall building can be a visual asset as a landmark. Because it draws attention to itself such a building should have a detailed design that rewards such attention. A tall building should also only be considered if the emphasis it brings is appropriate to its location in the wider townscape.

2.1.3. A new building can be helped to harmonise if the scale of its detailing relates to that of neighbouring buildings. Matters to be considered include the pattern of fenestration, the nature and location of architectural embellishment, and the texture of the building materials.





2.1.4. As a general rule the scale of detail should be smaller, and the texture of material richer, in proportion to the intimacy of the space in which the building is set. Where a building is mainly seen at close distances or in oblique views it is important to create the small scale detail that gives eye-catching interest. Bland, large scale, finishes impoverish the environment of such intimate areas.

2.2. Note 2: Proposals for new shop buildings should include shopfront details to ensure unity of style.

2.2.1 It is an objective of these guidelines to ensure that new shopfronts relate satisfactorily to the shop building. When new shop buildings are being designed it is considered important that the architectural details of the shopfronts should be designed at the same time to achieve this

objective. It is sometimes proposed by developers that only the first floor and above should be detailed in an initial submission, with shopfronts to be designed 'by others'. In the absence of a strong architectural framework, however, it is difficult to ensure that the later shopfronts are not visually chaotic.

2.2.2. Harmonious shopfronts should not be seen as a problem for traders, as there is ample opportunity for variation in colour and sign-writing to express individuality.

2.3. Note 3: Original period shopfronts or shopfront features of good quality should be retained and restored, especially in Conservation Areas and Commercial Improvement Areas.

2.3.1 Before a new shopfront is designed the existing shopfront, if there is one, should be carefully

considered. Many shopfronts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have a character and quality of craftsmanship that would be difficult to reproduce today. Repair may be cheaper than building a new shopfront. A further advantage is that no planning consent is needed for a repair. Even if it is decided to renew the shop window and door, a scheme that retains a good shop surround will be preferable to one that replaces it.

2.4. Note 4: New shopfronts should retain, and not conceal, any architectural features of the shop building.

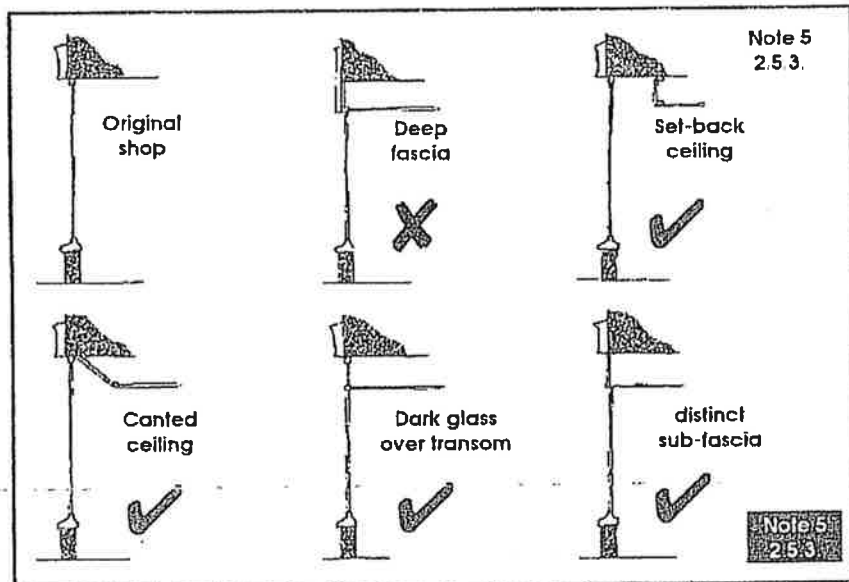
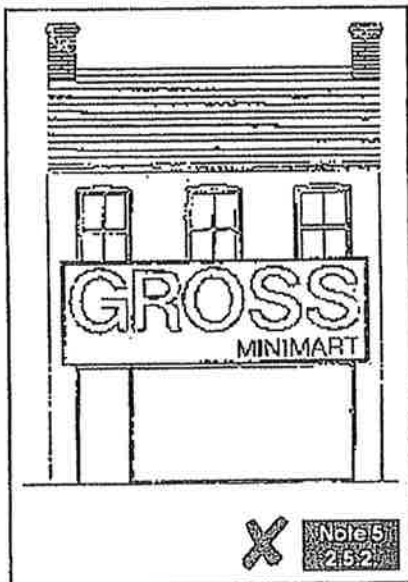
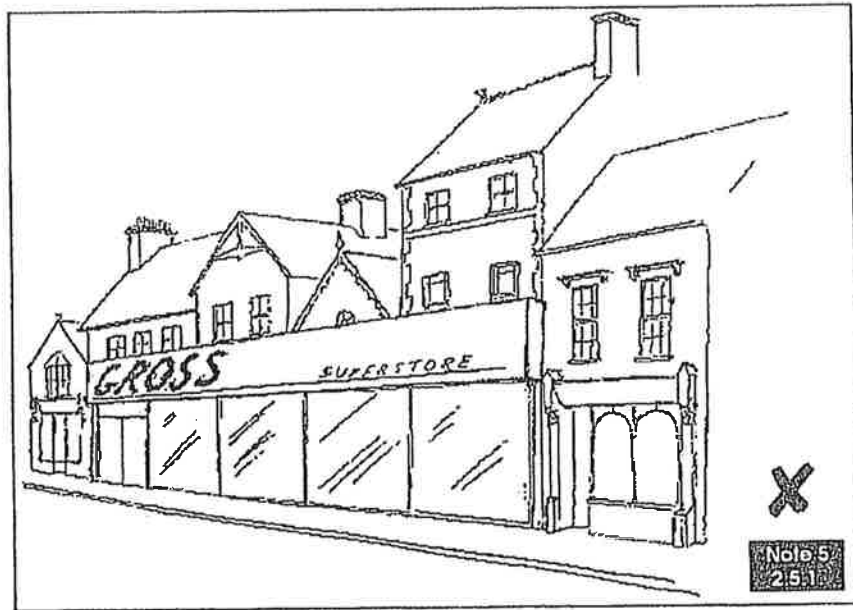
2.4.1 Details such as arched openings, string courses, or decorative cornices, are part of the character and individuality of a shop building. Such details should not be removed, or obscured by a new shopfront.

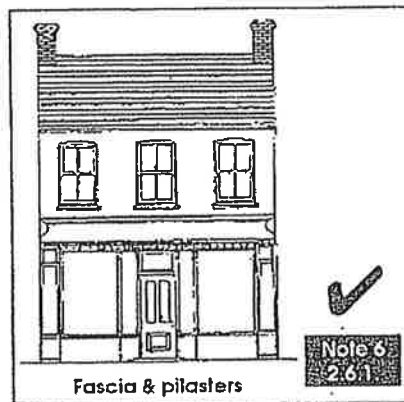
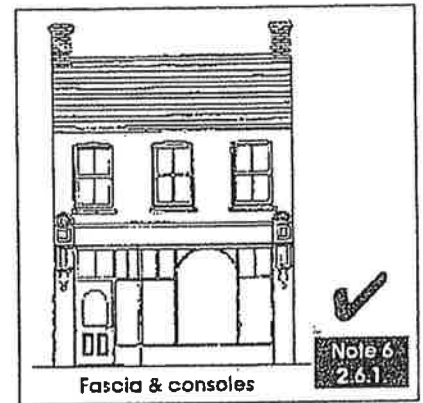
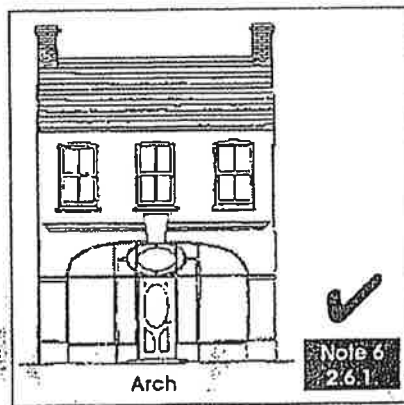
2.5. Note 5: New shopfronts should be in scale with the shop building and with any adjoining shopfronts of good quality.

2.5.1. A single shopfront extending over two or more shop buildings creates a conflict of scale. That conflict damages the appearance of the street. An over-long shopfront also disrupts the rhythm of shop units. With separate shopfronts - even for the same business - a walk down the street is filled with interest. A long, undivided shopping frontage is, by comparison, dull and uninviting.

2.5.2. Fascia size should also be kept in scale with the shop building. Fascias are sometimes widened to increase their impact but this usually results in an unsatisfactory appearance with the fascia becoming a dominating feature.

2.5.3. Occasionally it may seem necessary to deepen a fascia to conceal a lowered ceiling inside a refurbished shop. There is, however, a choice of preferable measures. The lowered ceiling may be set back or canted to create a shop window display area. The shop window may be designed with a transom at the level of the lowered ceiling, with dark or reflective glass above to conceal the void. Finally, a carefully designed and clearly distinct sub-fascia can be used below the main fascia, to keep the whole in scale with the shop building.





2.6. Note 6: New shopfronts should give visual support to the upper floors of the shop building.

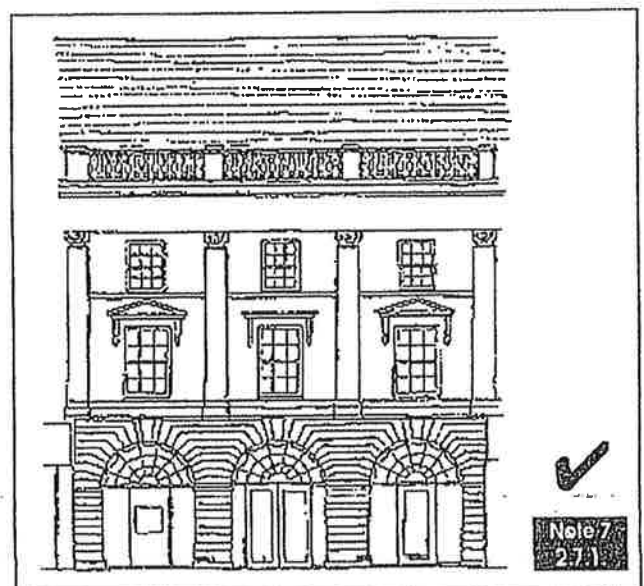
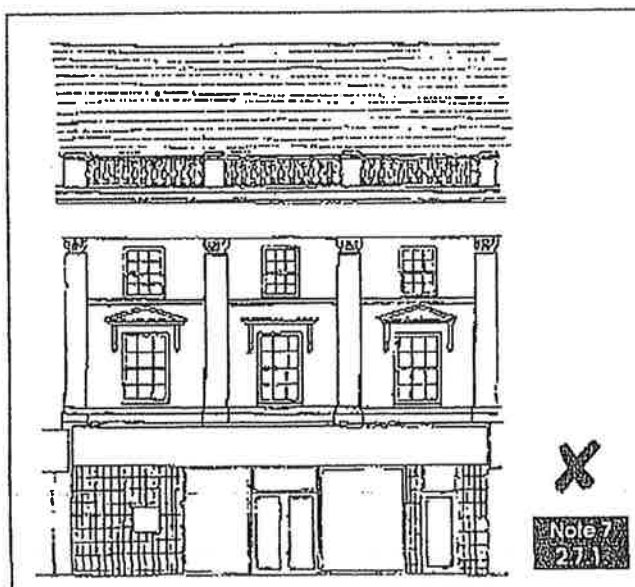
2.6.1. The shopfront is part of a whole building frontage. A good shopfront will look as if it is able to support the upper floors to give visual stability and strength to the shop building. Only if the shopfront is in the form of a cabinet or showcase projecting

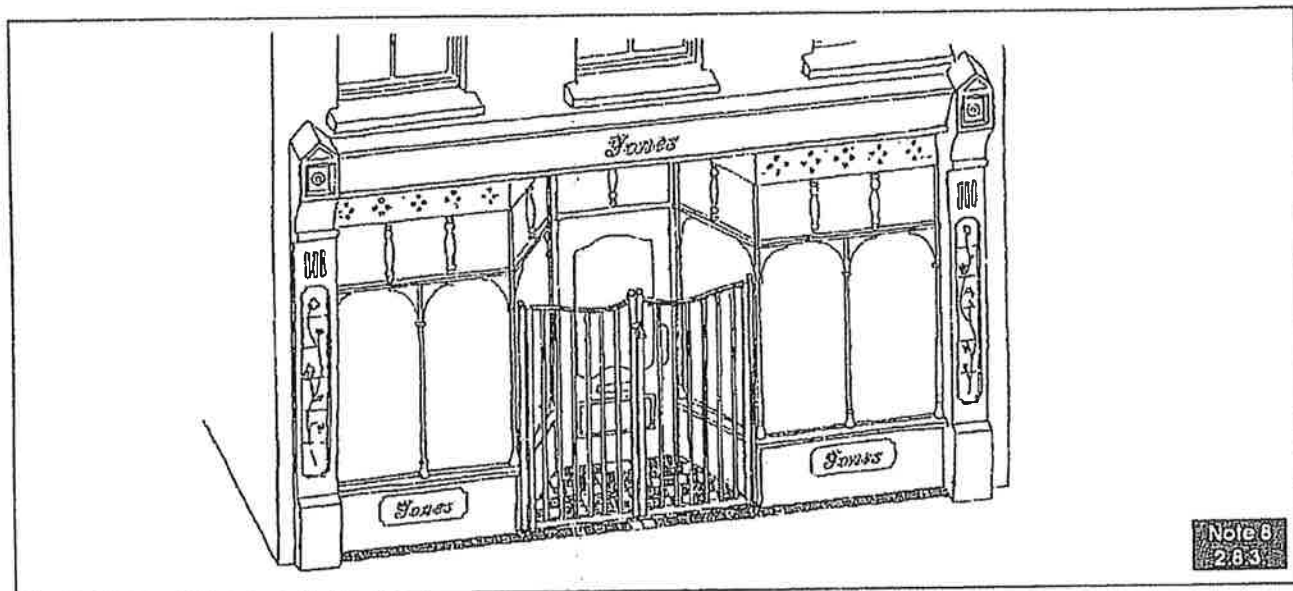
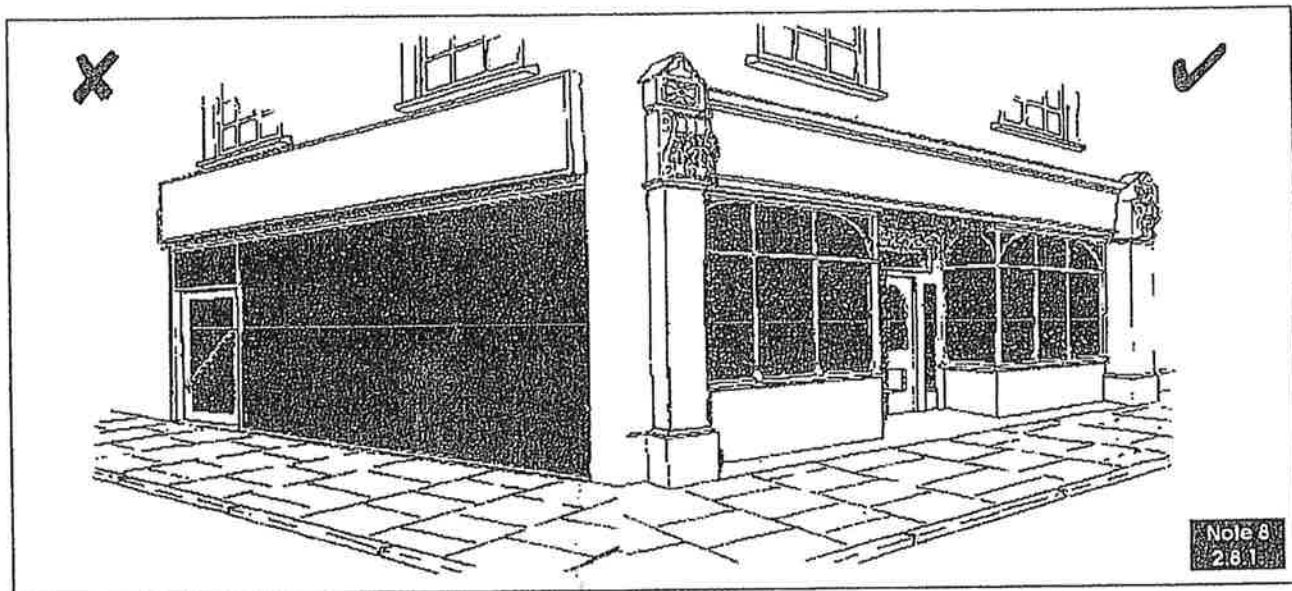
beyond the building face is the necessity for visual support reduced.

2.7. Note 7: A new shopfront should relate to the style of the shop building.

2.7.1. If the shop front is designed to relate to the character and appearance of the shop building it will be given enhanced

presence. The character of the whole building will be strengthened and it will play a bigger part in creating the unique identity of the shopping area. Relationship can be established by the re-use of details from the upper floors in close stylistic match for the shopfront. At the very least, an echo of the proportions of the upper floor can link the two elements





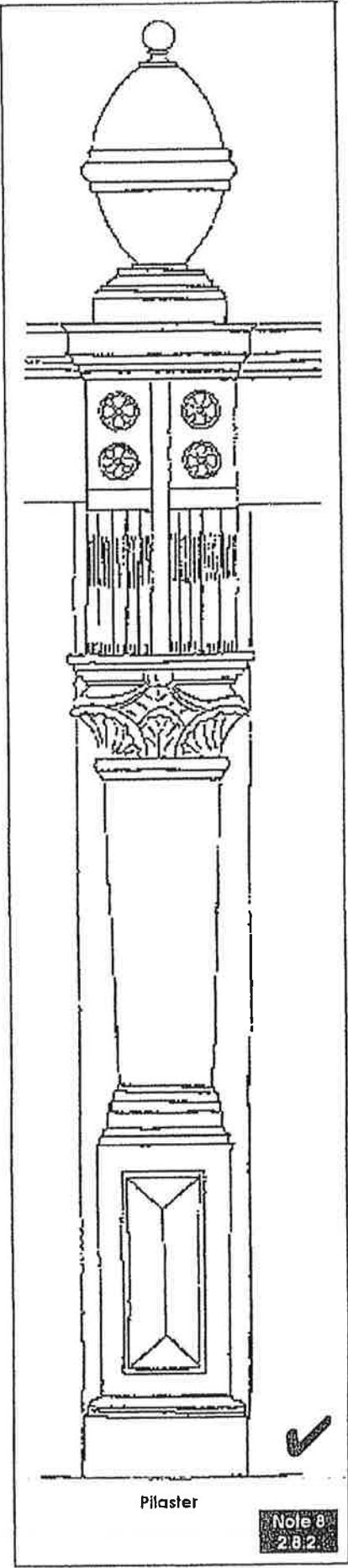
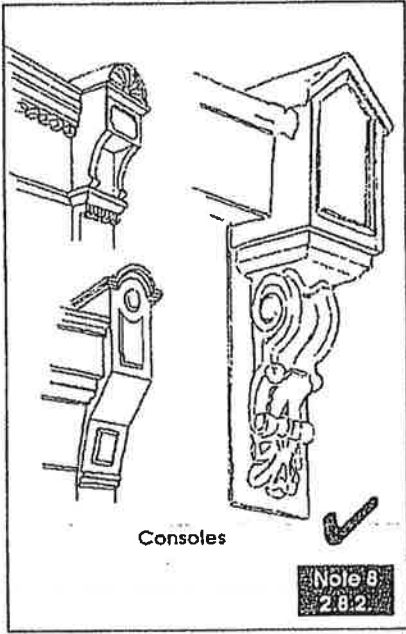
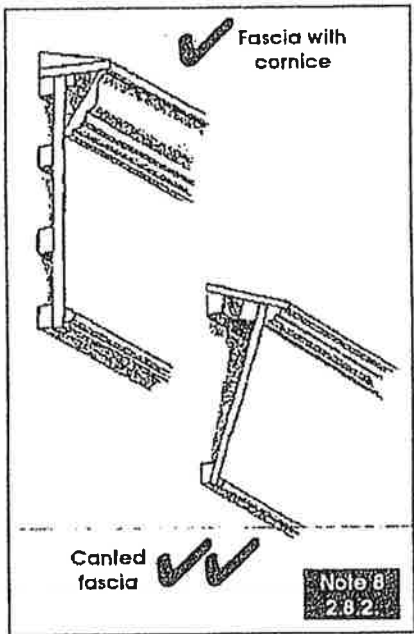
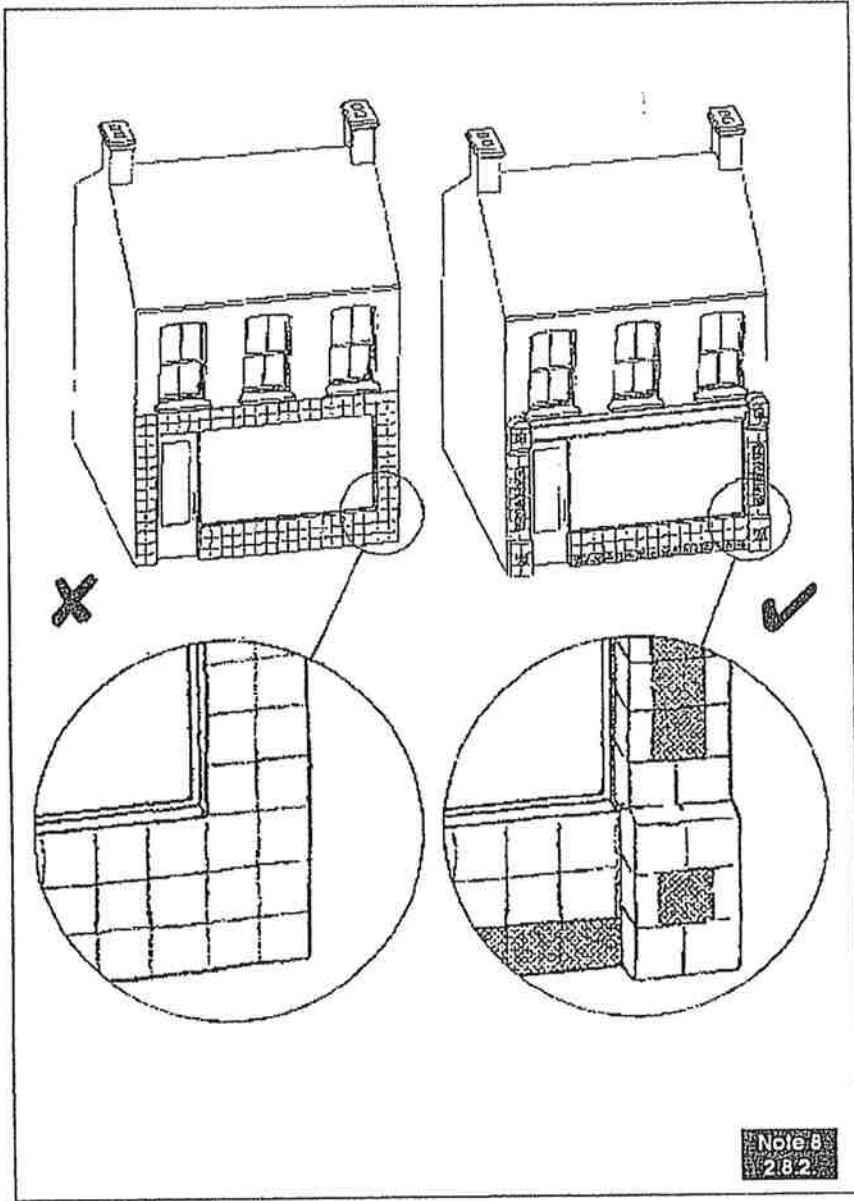
2.8. Note 8: A shopfront should have three-dimensional interest.

2.8.1 Too many modern shopfronts are dull and unrewarding because they are flat, and have little differentiation from the plane of the wall. As they are mostly seen obliquely at close distances by passers-by the lack of projection and recession of the parts of the shopfront is a missed opportunity for enrichment

2.8.2. A three-dimensional shopfront could have, for example, an entry recess, a canted fascia, and projecting pilasters and decorative consoles. The result is shadow, detail, liveliness, and interest.

2.8.3. Shop owners sometimes consider an entry recess to be a security problem. The recess, however, can be a key feature of a successful shopfront, providing a focal point both visually and functionally. The decoration of the floor and ceiling of the recess can substantially enhance the perceived quality of the shopfront. Before an existing or proposed recess is deleted from a design the possibility of enhanced illumination and night-time gates or shutters should be considered to overcome the security problem

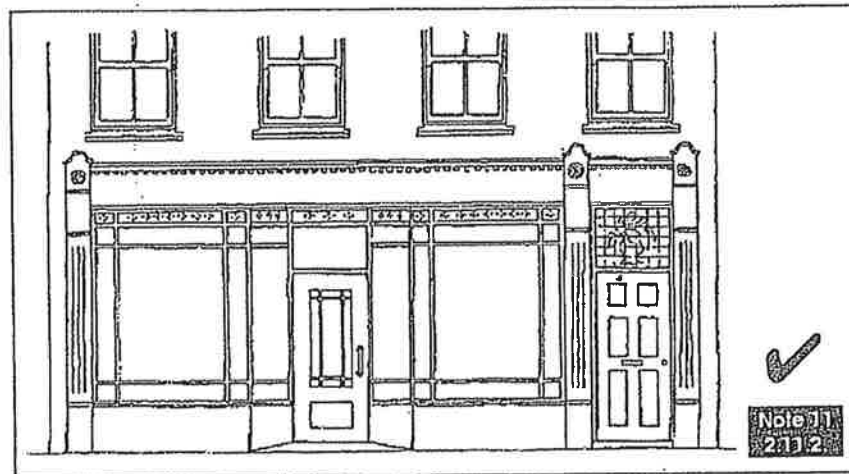
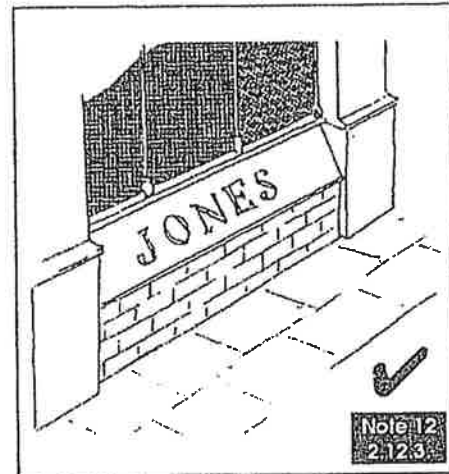
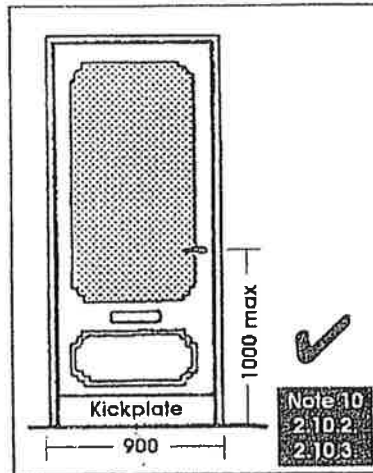
2.8.4. If an existing entrance recess is removed the quality of the shopfront design as a whole should be increased in compensation.



2.9. Note 9: Shopfronts and their associated advertisements should be finished in materials sympathetic in colour and texture to those of the shop building and of the street as a whole.

2.9.1. The best materials for new or replacement shopfronts are the traditional materials that symbolise continuity, permanence and quality - softwood, brick, stone, plaster, ceramic tiles and paint.

2.9.2. Shopfronts are not improved by garish coloured perspex fascias. Bright colour draws attention to the material, which looks weak because of its slightly translucent surface sheen. A fascia looks better in a painted or semi-matt finish. Colour should be chosen with consideration for the context to prevent competition between aggressive colour ruining the appearance of the shopping area. The use of softwood allows the greatest opportunity for the introduction of detail and decoration. If the design of the shopfront is well related to that of the shop building subsequent change of user can be accommodated by repainting rather than replacement.



2.10. Note 10: New shopfronts should allow adequate access for everybody.

2.10.1. To allow easy access the threshold should ideally be flush with the pavement. If there must be a ramp its slope should be preferably about 1 in 20, but certainly no steeper than 1 in 12. Floor surfaces should be even, firm, and non-slip. Steps should be avoided.

2.10.2. The door should have a clear opening width of not less than 830mm. A clear width of at least 900mm would be better, to give room for a double pushchair. If double doors are used one of the leaves should give a clear opening of not less than 800mm.

2.10.3. Accessories such as door handles, bell pushes, and letter boxes are best sited no higher than 1000mm above floor level, so that they can be reached from a wheelchair. Lever handles are more easily used than doorknobs.

Self closers should be adjusted so that they are not too strong for people with disabilities to cope with. Wherever possible, doors should have a kick-plate.

2.10.4. The design of the shop door should be compatible with that of the shopfront.

2.11. Note 11: Any existing access to the upper floors should be retained.

2.11.1. There are benefits to the property owner and the community as a whole in keeping in, or returning to, use the upper floors of shop buildings. If those floors do not have an independent access their use may be constrained or prevented.

2.11.2. Existing accesses should therefore be retained, and improved to the same standard as the new shopfront to ensure the overall appearance has a consistent quality.

2.12. Note 12: The design of a shopfront should include clear and integrated provision for advertising.

2.12.1. It should be no surprise that nearly every shop carries advertising: either the name of the shop, or of the proprietor, or a description of the goods or services offered. Nevertheless good shopfronts are often spoiled by inappropriate advertising.

2.12.2. A place for advertising should therefore be identified in the initial design of the shopfront. Consideration should be given to allowing signs to be changed without damaging the structure of the shopfront and to allocating sufficient space to incorporate the bilingual signs encouraged by the Wales Tourist Board.

2.12.3. Generally, the fascia will be the most appropriate location for advertising but the stallriser can also be utilised.

| TYPE OF ILLUMINATION | RECOMMENDED USE |
|--|--|
| 1. External Illumination | General application but especially suited to country pubs, village shops, and buildings of architectural or historic interest |
| 2. Internal Illumination (letters only) | Shopping areas generally, provided box is integrated with shop building. 'Halo' lighting is suitable for buildings of special character. |
| 3. Internal illumination (whole fascia or projecting sign) | Not recommended |
| 4. Neon Tubing | In town centres, or undistinguished town fringe areas (not countryside) only where American character is deliberately sought. |
| 5. Intermittent Lighting Displays | Not recommended. |

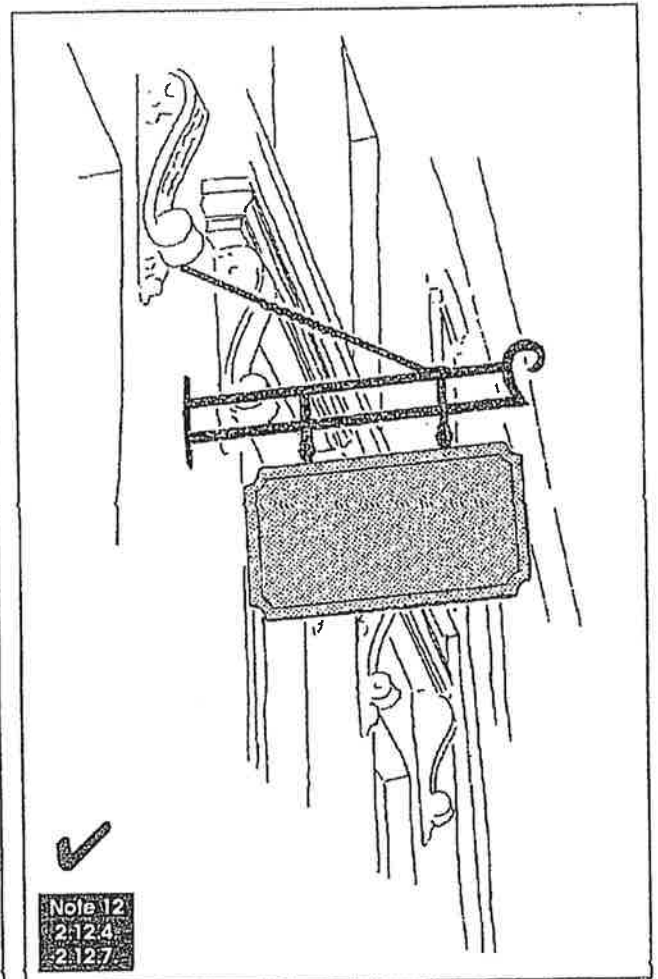
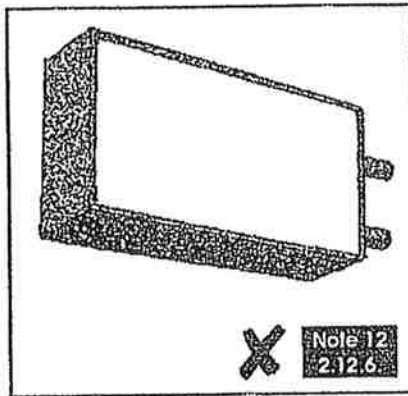
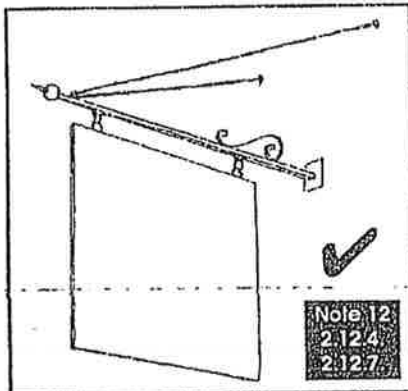


Table 1



2.12.4 Traditional decorative hanging signs or symbols can be a visual asset when they are in keeping with the building and the street as a whole.

2.12.5 The most satisfying shop advertising is executed in traditional materials (wood, cast metal, enamel, paint, gold leaf) and are signwritten or formed with imaginative decorative richness. If plastics are used the surface finish should be matt or semi-matt to enhance the visual weight and solidity of the sign.



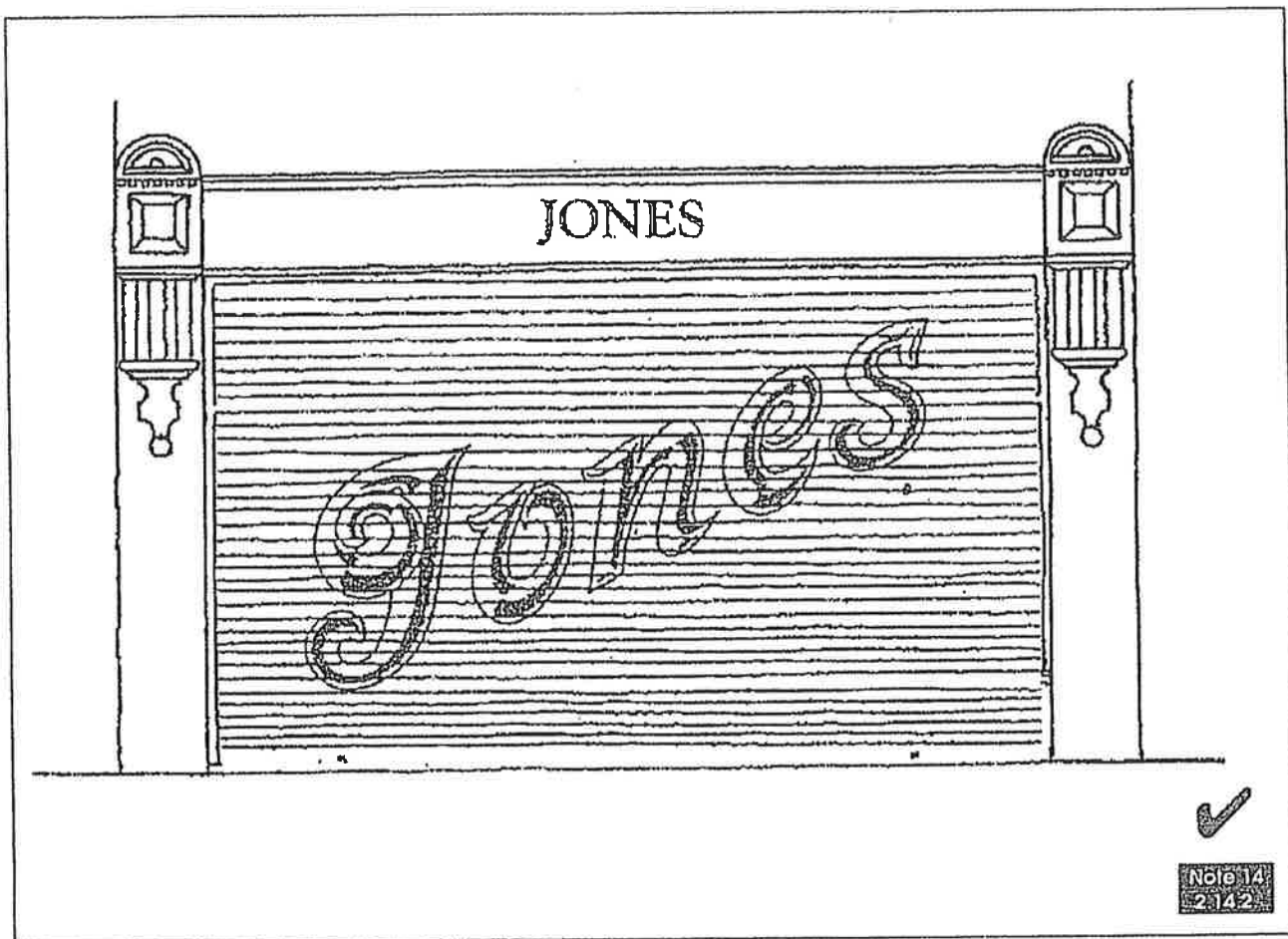
2.12.6 The illumination of shop advertising can add liveliness to the evening and winter character of shopping areas. It can also bring visual clutter, can appear inappropriate in its setting, and can even create hazards if drivers are dazzled or distracted. In thinking of illuminated signs attention should also be paid to their daytime appearance. Table 1 indicates the different

types of illuminated signs and the applications for which they can be recommended.

2.12.7. To avoid clutter there should normally be no more than one hanging or projecting sign on any one elevation of the shop building. To avoid obstruction the bottom of the sign should be no less than 2100mm above the pavement, and no part of the sign should be closer than 450mm to the edge of the carriageway. The sign should be located where it does not damage or obscure any architectural features. A hanging sign should have a substantial and well-designed bracket.

2.13. Note 13: Signs on shops should make imaginative use of type faces and symbols to enrich the street scene.

2.13.1 Traditional shopfronts celebrated the skill of the signwriter and signmaker. At their best the signs would be works of art.



Signs of good quality make a significant contribution to the pleasure of walking through a shopping area, and therefore to the attractiveness of that area.

2.13.2. The choice of type face for a sign should be given more thought than now sometimes seems the case. The prevalence of simple SANS-SERIF capitals, for example, is at odds with their lack of intrinsic interest.

2.13.3. Lettering for a fascia or stallriser is best thought of as part of the architecture of the building. It will usually look better, therefore, if it has the architectural qualities of stability and robustness. *ITALIC* letter forms can look awkward because the dynamism of their slant conflicts with the static verticality of the building. Script and very light letter forms can look too weak to be a satisfactory part of the building.

2.13.4. On hanging signs the architectural constraints on the lettering are less, and it is more important that the sign rewards

the attention which its form attracts. The hanging sign also offers an opportunity for the imaginative use of symbols, echoing old traditions.

2.14. Note 14: Security devices should be integrated with the design of the shopfront.

2.14.1. Well-designed shopfronts can often be spoiled by unsightly security shutters. The need for security devices is sometimes unavoidable, but they should be made part of the shopfront rather than being added as an afterthought.

2.14.2. Solid roller shutters are not recommended, but if they must be used they are best painted to match the shop window surround. A revival of the Victorian practice of signwriting on the shutter would add interest to the frontage of the closed shop.

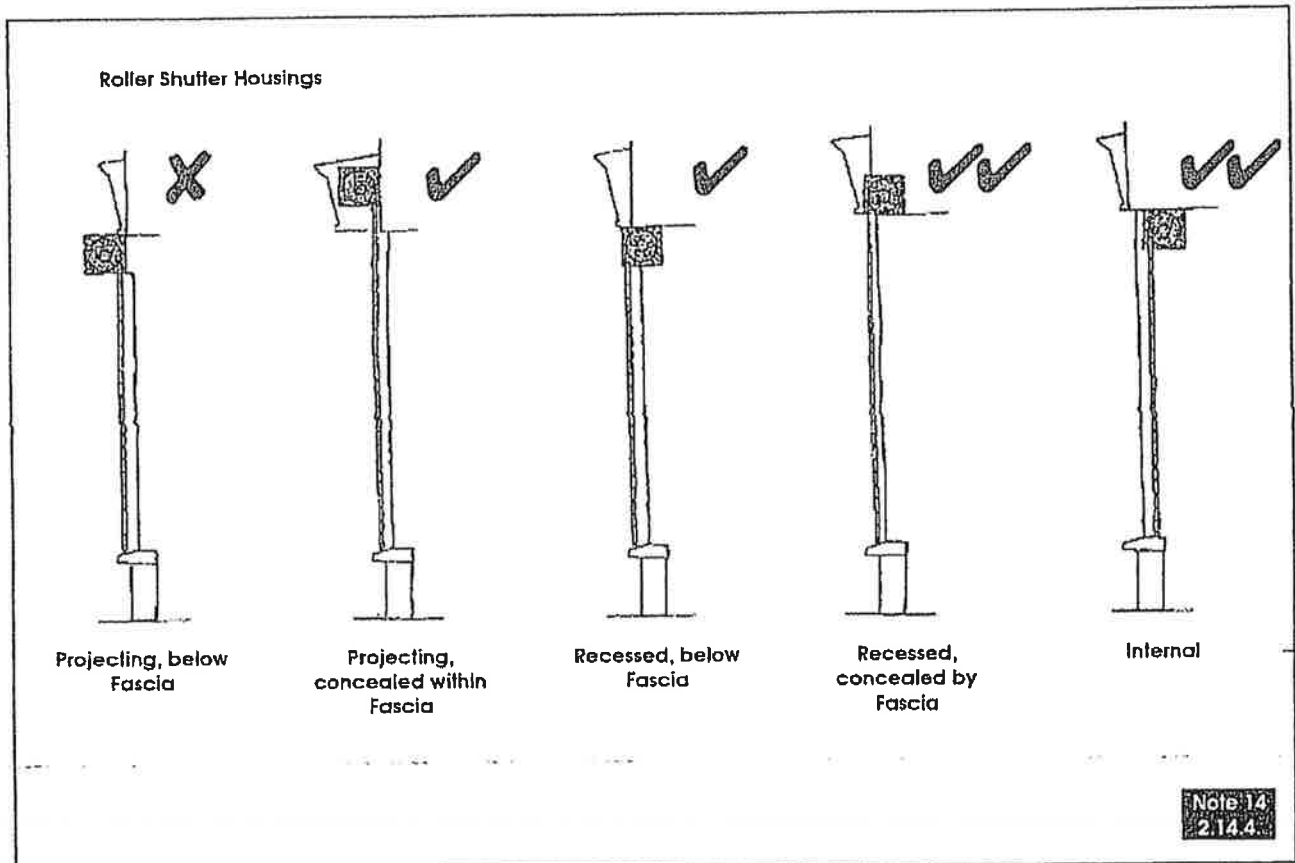
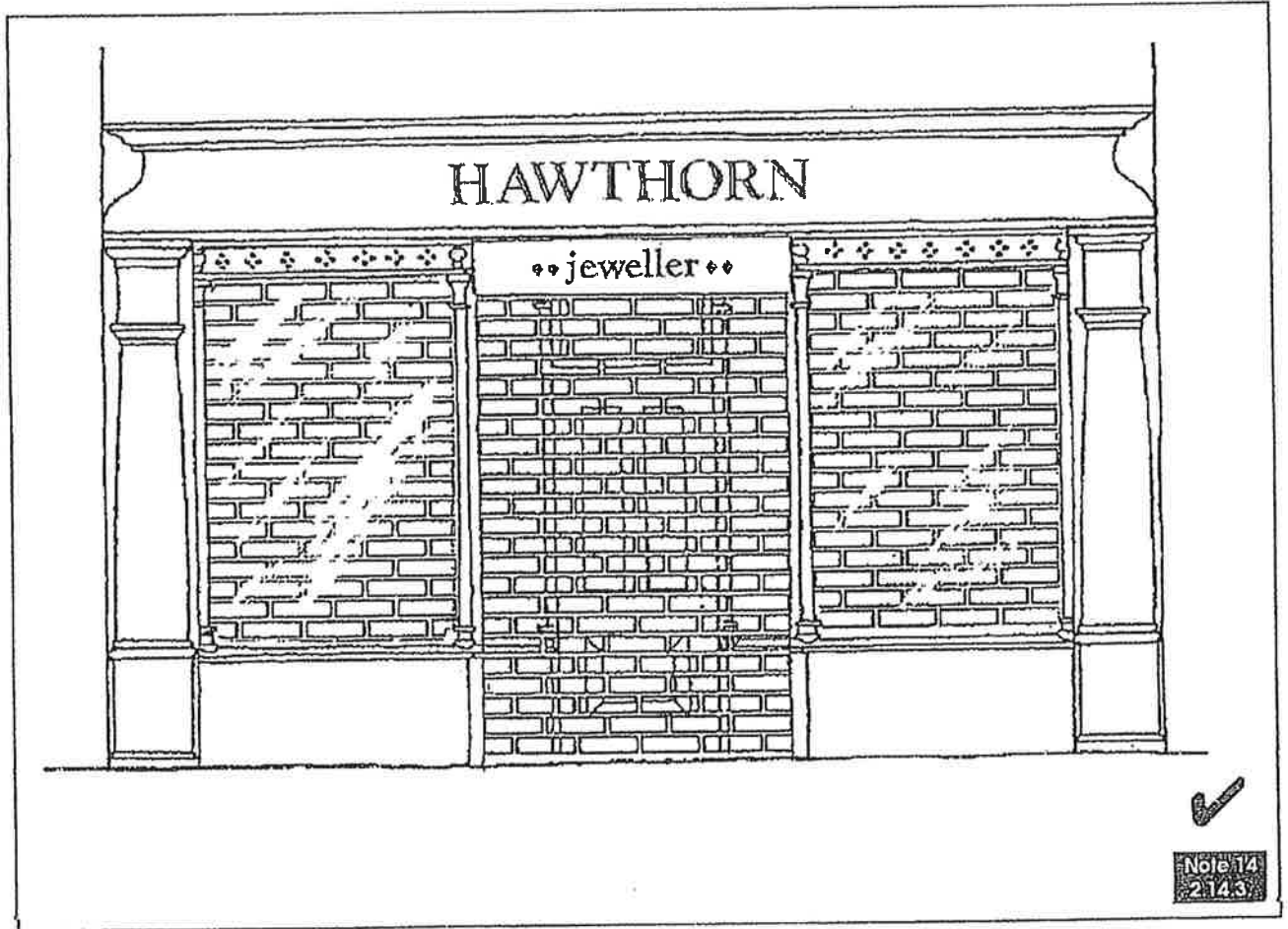
2.14.3. It is better to use a grille rather than a solid shutter so that the window display can still be seen. Best of all is a grille

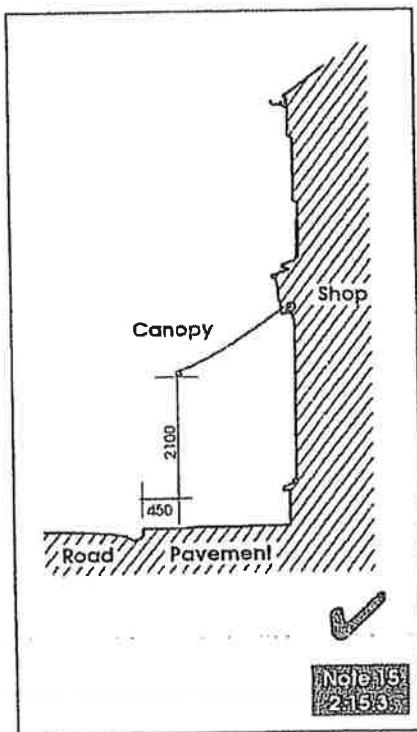
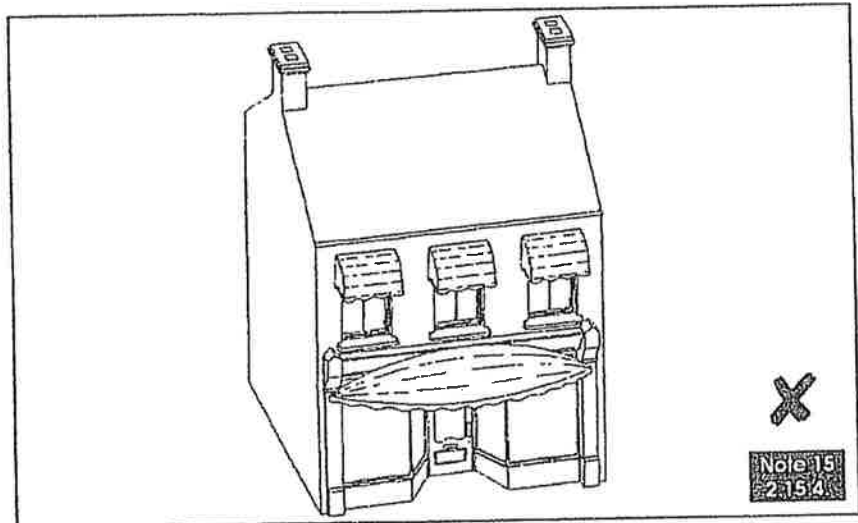
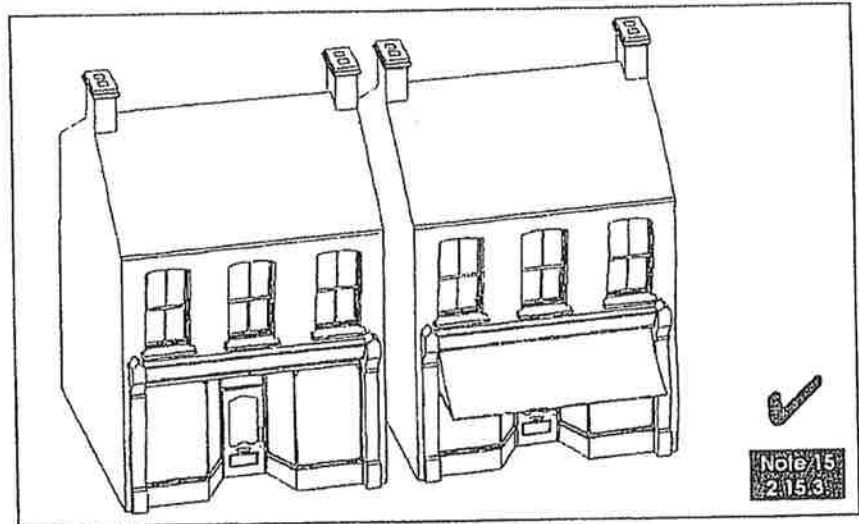
fitted inside the window, where it can protect the stock yet have almost no effect on the appearance on the shopfront.

2.14.4. Roller grilles or shutters require bulky housings to retract into when the shop is open. They also need vertical guide rails for the sides of the shutters. If poorly fitted, these can be very ugly features, and care should be taken to integrate them with the design of the shopfront.

2.14.5. The box for a burglar alarm is another security device that should be sited where it will not detract from the architectural character of the shop building.

2.14.6. Occasionally bollards are proposed as a security measure in front of shop windows. While the problems for the retailer are understandable, it is considered that a proliferation of bollards could create obstruction hazards for pedestrians and could also be visually detrimental to the shopping areas.





2.15. Note 15: Canopies or awnings should have a traditional character, and should only be used on ground floor shop windows where there is a genuine need for shading.

2.15.1. Canopies and awnings are assertive elements in the street scene. Too much variety in style, location, and materials can look cluttered. While a canopy can offer a little shelter and a touch of colour it can also detract from the appearance of a building by its awkward shape, unsuitable materials and the concealment of architectural features.

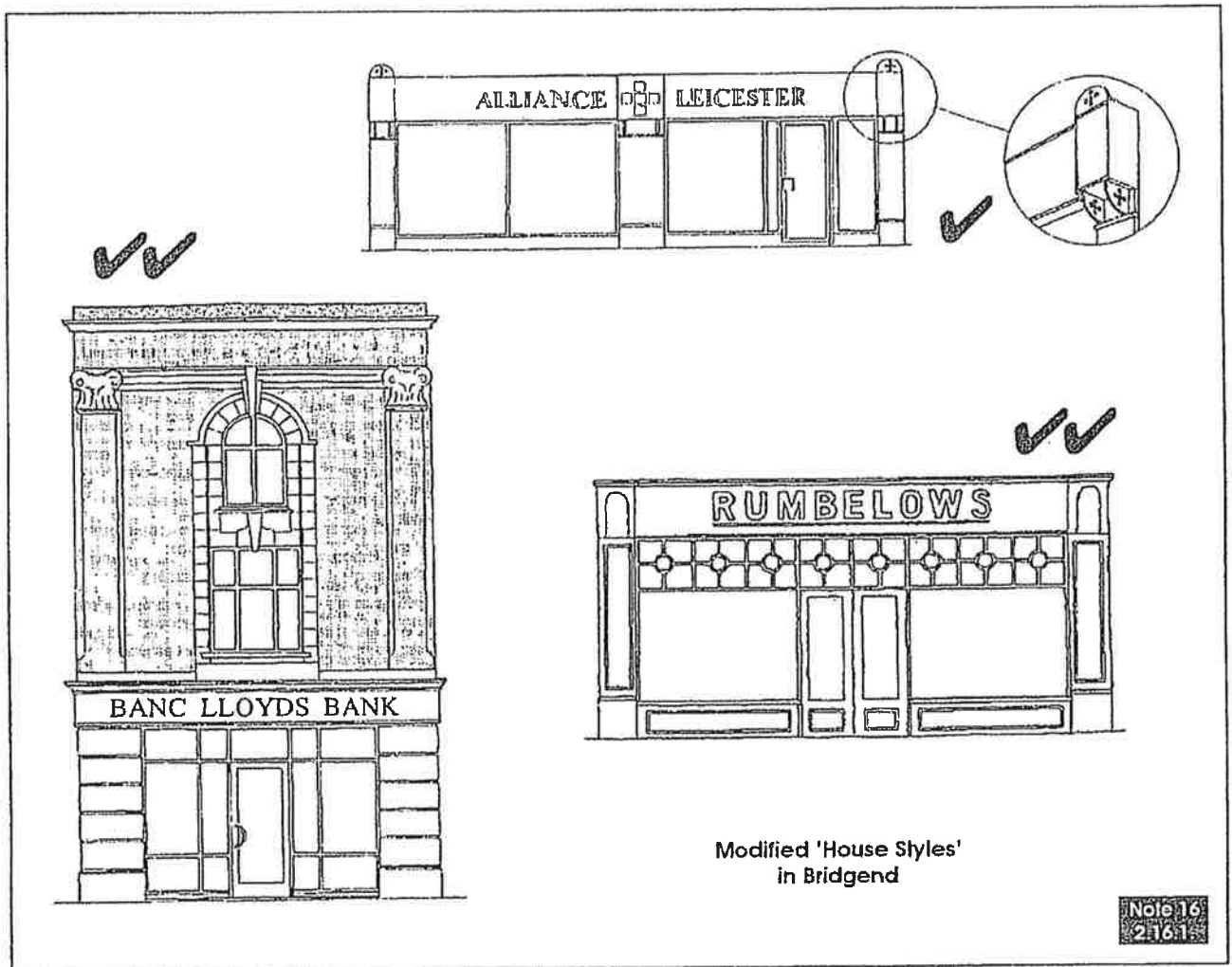
2.15.2. No canopy or awning should be used unless the shading of the window is essential. Even then the use of a tinted roller blind inside the window may be a better way to provide shade without spoiling the appearance

of the shop front.

2.15.3. If shade is essential, a traditional roller awning integrated with the fascia is preferable to a fixed or folding box or bow-shaped canopy, and canvas type materials are better than metallic or wet-look glass plastics. To ensure that no obstruction is created the awning should be at least 2100mm above pavement level and set back at least 450mm from the edge of the carriageway.

2.15.4. Canopies fitted to first or second floor windows tend to add clutter and inappropriate accents to the street scene and are not recommended.

2.15.5. Canopies are rarely appropriate for listed buildings or buildings within conservation areas, and are not recommended in those circumstances.



Modified 'House Styles' in Bridgend

2.16. Note 16: Standardised 'corporate image' shopfronts should be modified to take account of the special characteristics of the shop building and the street as a whole.

2.16.1. The house style of some national businesses can be an unsatisfactory intrusion into the street scene. The purpose of a house style is understandable; it is to make the company recognisable in all towns through the use of a standard image for its branches. Unfortunately the imposition of a centrally designed shopfront cannot take account of the architectural character of all the buildings to which it is fitted. It is also incompatible with the strengthening of the individuality of each shopping area. Therefore the corporate image should be interpreted with sensitivity towards the particular character of the shop building and the individuality of the shopping area, and it

should be modified to accord with the general principles outlined in these advice notes

2.17. Note 17: Unusual and imaginative shopfront designs appropriate to the shop building and to the surrounding area will be encouraged.

2.17.1. Nothing in this Design Guide is intended to prevent the design of imaginative and original shopfronts. The appearance of the street can be enriched by novel and unusual design, appropriately used. Diversity, colour, and decoration are part of the tradition of shopfront design.

2.17.2. Imagination does not have to express itself at a dramatically large scale. Shopfronts are seen from close to, so that it is perfectly possible to create individuality by the use of small but unusual detailing of the traditional shopfront

2.17.3. A more comprehensively unusual shopfront will attract attention to itself, and it will become a focal feature. Depending on the location of the shop such a point of emphasis will either enhance or disrupt the image of the street. Appropriate locations for the unusual would be where an existing point of emphasis can be strengthened, such as the termination of a view or a change in direction. Less appropriate would be in the centre of an existing harmonious group of buildings, or where the new shopfront would draw the eye from an established landmark.

2.17.4. If an unusual, original, or experimental design is being considered, it is recommended that early discussions about the proposal are held with the Planning Department

3. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY

3.1. The Development Plan for Ogwr incorporates the relevant policies of the Mid Glamorgan County Structure Plan and the policies of the Ogwr Borough Local Plan.

3.2. The County Structure Plan Incorporating Approved Structure Plan Alterations No. 1 became operational on the 12th. September 1989. There are no directly relevant Structure Plan policies, but policy R2 expresses the importance of the existing shopping areas:

"There will be a presumption in favour of shopping development in town centres and particularly those in the valley hearts"

3.3. Ogwr Borough Local Plan has passed through its deposit stage and will be the subject of a public local inquiry commencing on the 8th. March 1994. The relevant Local Plan policy is No R9, which states:

"The environment of the established commercial centres of the Borough will be improved by:-
(1) The implementation of effective traffic management measures in Bridgend and Porthcawl town centres, including the provision of appropriate servicing arrangements, car parking and pedestrianisation schemes;
(2) The implementation of grant assisted improvement schemes in the commercial improvement areas of Maesteg, Caerau, Nantyllyon, Blaengarw, Pontycymmer, Nantymoel, Ogmore Vale, and Kenfig Hill "

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Borough Council publishes a leaflet "Notes for Applicants" intended to assist the making of a planning application. The following checklist adds to those notes with particular reference to applications for new shopfronts.

To minimise any delay in the consideration of a planning application the following should be included:

1 Four copies of the completed planning application form. (Forms available from the Council Offices)

2 One copy of the correct Certificate under Article 12A of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988.

3 The correct fee. (A guide to the current fee for different types of application is available from the Council Offices).

4 Four copies of a plan (not less than 1:2500 scale) showing the location of the application site. The site should be shaded or outlined in RED. Any adjoining land owned or controlled by the applicant should be shown in BLUE.

5 Four copies of plans and elevations of the existing building and shopfront (not less than 1:100 scale). If the application relates solely to the shopfront, with no internal work to the shop building, a plan of the front wall only will be sufficient.

6 Four copies of plans and elevations of the building as proposed (not less than 1:100 scale; 1:50 is recommended). The elevations should show the upper floors of the shop building, even if the proposed changes only affect the shopfront. Full details should be given of the intended materials and colour of the external finishes. It can assist the determination of an application if details of the shopfront are illustrated at 1:20 scale, to demonstrate their quality.

NOTE: Plans should be signed by the applicant or his agent. All duplicates should be true copies of the original.

Plans are open to public inspection. Applicants are not, however, required to disclose any proposed security arrangements. If a shop is listed, listed building consent will be needed for the new shopfront, in addition to planning permission.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

5.1. These notes can only offer general advice. If it is not clear how the advice notes apply to a particular shopfront the proposal may be discussed with staff of the Borough Planning Department. Letters should be addressed to:

Mr. N. A. McGaw B.Sc., MRTPI
The Borough Planning Officer, Ogwr Borough Council,
P.O. Box 4, Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend,
Mid Glamorgan. CF31 1LX.

If telephoning, ring Bridgend (0656) 643643 and ask for the Planning (Development Control) Section.
 The Design Guide reference to quote is DG.3.