

## Uttlesford District Council

Shopfront Design Guide SPD

Public consultation - ran for 6 weeks until 11/05/22

Consultation response	Person/organisation	Address	Our response
<i>Please accept this as our formal response as considered at our planning and transport committee meeting held on Thursday 28th April. SWTC are in support of the shop front design policy which is currently being consulted upon.</i>	Saffron Walden Town Council	Saffron Walden Town Council	Thank you letter
<i>Paragraph 190 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) sets out that Plans, including SPDs, should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. In particular, this strategy needs to take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of all types of heritage asset where possible, the need for new development to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and ensure that it considers opportunities to use the existing historic environment to help reinforce the character of a place</i>			Text consistent with this statement
<i>Overall, we consider that this is a concise, and clearly written guide. We are pleased to note that our advice is referenced, but please refer to 'Historic England' not English Heritage (para 1.14).</i>			Amended
<i>Para 3.14 – we support the recommendation for undertaking like-for-like repairs, particularly where frontages are listed and/or in conservation areas.</i>			
<i>Para 3.15 – we welcome this approach, as it mirrors our advice and indeed the criteria for funding via our conservation area grant schemes. However, we would suggest adding sources of information, such as local studies library/museums or the Essex County Archive photographic collections, to support this advice.</i>			Added
<i>Section 3.3 – we suggest advising owners to employ a suitably qualified conservation accredited architect to design replacement traditional shopfronts. Faux-traditional shopfronts often lack the precise detailing and elegant proportions of original examples, and ensuring these details are correct is often important to achieving a high quality new shopfront that enhances the historic character of the host building and streetscape.</i>			Added
<i>Section 5 is overall clear and helpful, but we suggest adding more illustrations and some further information (or sources of) in places to augment the advice.</i>			Added
<i>Section 5.64/6 – new shopfronts in traditional style are sometimes let down by the need for much thicker mullions to support double glazing. Historic single glazed plate glass shop windows, as with other windows, required slimmer profile structural elements. However, improving thermal efficiency is important to the long term sustainability of commercial buildings. Where new shopfronts are to be installed in sensitive historic areas, we therefore suggest recommending that slim profile vacuum glazing is considered, as this is a lightweight but very thermally efficient glass that will allow for an elegant and traditionally proportioned shopfront.</i>			Added
<i>Section 5.7 – there is some detailed and useful advice regarding the appropriate choice of timber elements in the Historic Towns and Villages Forum's documentation. For example, the use of modern, swift grown softwood and plastic alkyd paints often results in failure and degradation of new timber shopfronts, so more information and advice on this point (or links to appropriate sources) may be useful to incorporate.</i>			Added

<p>We recommend incorporating a few more illustrations (either drawings or photographs) throughout the document to complement the text and visually explain what is being recommended where possible. Uttlesford is particularly blessed with attractive examples of traditional shopfronts in its towns and villages that could add colour and local flavour to the document, but equally important are photographic examples of poor quality frontages or details to be avoided. This applies to the descriptive elements in Sections 5-7 particularly, and also in Section 3.21 above it may also be helpful to provide visual examples of the Art Deco, or Modernist shopfront styles described.</p>	Historic England	Historic England	Added
<p>We strongly support Section 7.2. Traditional canopies are an important but often neglected element of shopfronts and their reinstatement should be strongly encouraged. We would recommend adding that canopies are also important for energy usage as they can control solar gain, particularly on south facing elevations.</p>			Added
<p>Section 7.5 – we would suggest incorporating more specific advice regarding the potential conversion of upper floors for residential uses, and the way to create access to these floors from the street whilst protecting the character and appearance of the frontages.</p>			Added
<p>We would recommend strengthening the language used – for example, we suggest the phrase “not permitted” instead of “resisted”, in various places.</p>			Amended
<p>In light of recent permitted development changes, we suggest that consideration of conversion of commercial units to residential use is considered as part of the guide. In particular, Uttlesford’s expectations of the retention of the shopfront and any important details as part of any conversion works that can be controlled via a planning application or by Article 4.</p>			Added
<p>A useful tool seen in other shopfront design guides (e.g. Reading) is a ‘Design checklist’ for shopfront alterations, included as an Appendix. This provides a helpful tool for decision takers in evaluating applications for modified or new shopfronts.</p>			Added
<p>We also suggest incorporating a Glossary of key terms, as well as an enlarged ‘Further Reading’ section at the back of the document containing references to further technical advice or sources of information regarding shopfronts. In particular, on top of our own advice that you have already referenced, we’d recommend the HTVF ‘Book of Details and Good Practice in Shopfront Design, which, although a relatively old document, still contains very helpful and more in-depth advice.</p>			Added
<p>With a view to making this information as accessible and interactive as possible, could the information currently contained in this PDF be converted into website format, with interactive clickable links to the various sections? For inspiration, please see a recent design guide produced in the Isle of Wight, which adopts this approach: <a href="https://iwdesignguide.uk">https://iwdesignguide.uk</a>.</p>			The document can be hosted on the Essex Design Guide website as a PDF with clickable links.
<p>Thaxted Parish Council resolved to fully support the proposed provisions of the draft shop front design guide. We fully endorse the comments made at paragraph 3.01 that shop fronts play a major part in defining the character of a town or village centre as well as being at the heart of its economic well-being. This accords with comments made in the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan.</p>			
<p>We only have one or two specific comments as follows:</p>			
<p>6.2 We were slightly confused as to what was covered by the reference to ‘internally illuminated signs’ since this then went on to refer to them being ‘on the exterior of the building’. Does this include illuminated neon signage in the windows. If not, we believe that this should be dealt with as a separate item.</p>			Amended

<p>7.2 Should the reference to 'roller blinds' in fact be 'roller canopies' 'roller blinds' are generally interpreted as something that are pulled down to cover the window.</p>	<p>Thaxted Parish Council</p>	<p>Thaxted Parish Council</p>	<p>Amended</p>
<p>8.00 The heading 'Legislation' is perhaps wrong as the subject matter relates to planning policy. Should the first line of 8.51 read 'within a designated Conservation Area?. We would also like to see reference to Neighbourhood Plans as well as the Local Plan. There are specific policies relating to shop fronts in the Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan.</p>			<p>Title to remain as 'legislation' because subject matter is planning policy which in turn references legislation. Other points addressed.</p>
<p>We were slightly confused as to the necessity to apply for planning permission/Listed Building Consent in relation to non-listed buildings in the Conservation Area. This perhaps needs a bit of further clarification. The Thaxted Neighbourhood Plan sought the adoption of an Article 4 Direction in relation to non-listed buildings in the conservation Area and we would like to see an endorsement of this aspiration and encouragement for the wider application of such directions.</p>			<p>No change made - Article 4 directions are already mentioned.</p>
<p>I have just read the document, 'Uttlesford Shop Front Design Guide'. Please can it be noted that I wholeheartedly agree with the new proposals – at last, our lovely historic areas that exist in the district are being recognised together with the need to preserve them for the future. It is always sad to see a street with lovely old buildings but garish shop fronts- you have to look up to see the history there. Thank you to all who have worked on this document and I hope it receives 100% support.</p>	<p>Melanie Ragg</p>	<p>58 Bentfield Green Stansted CM24 8HX</p>	<p>Thank you letter</p>
<p>As a resident who has seen the saffron Walden town centre become less and less appealing in the 20 plus years I have lived here, I am disappointed with the councils direction of travel in this regard. The vitality and viability of town centres needs to be repaired before you can expect landlords and/or tenants to spend vast sums in complying with your proposed design code. Make the whole of king street and market street traffic free and invest time in pop up shops and encouraging local firms to take some space. They need to reduce their capital costs not increase them. Give them a forum not a headache. Make it cost effective, don't profiteer from the pop up shops and generate some activity and life back into our town.</p>	<p>Philip Standen</p>	<p>11 beck road Saffron walden Essex CB11 4EH</p>	<p>Response letter detailing Council's approach to concerns</p>
<p>I should like to commend UDC on producing a Shop Front Guide that seeks to preserve and enhance the character of our towns. Its proposals on reducing street clutter and ensuring good visual design and appropriate lighting are admirable. I hope that the plan is approved,</p>	<p>Paul Wilsher</p>	<p>7 Waterbutt Row  Quendon</p>	<p>Thank you letter</p>