



Bathgate

Shop Front Improvement Guidance

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West Lothian
Council

Design Guidelines

As a commercial focus for over 100 years much of the character and image of Bathgate Town Centre is derived from the ground floor shop-fronts. It is appropriate, therefore, to ensure appropriate design and quality in shop front alterations and improvements in support of the promotion of the town as a visitor and competitive retail destination. Many shop fronts have been altered from their original state over time. However, their basic form may survive beneath layers of additions and change. Even where substantial loss has occurred it may be possible to reinstate lost elements or proportions to bring back much of the missing character. Even relatively modest proposals can have a positive effect, as in many cases it may be possible to bring the shop front back to original character incrementally through relatively modest changes over time. It should be noted that works to shop-fronts might need planning permission and/or building warrants and the installation of advertisements/signage may require advertisement consent.

General Design

Where a shop occupies more than one building, any replacement of the shop front should take account of the individual buildings and should not be designed as a unified whole extending across both facades. The corporate styles of multiple stores should be adjusted to suit local circumstances.

Traditional Features

Traditional shop front stall risers - the part of the elevation filling the area between the shop window and the pavement - and sills should be retained if original and treated simply in flat timber or render and coloured to match the rest of the shop front. The stall risers should not be made into features through tiling, advertisements, panelling or painting in dramatically contrasting colours. Recessed doors should be retained if they survive. Traditional feature such as pilasters - rectangular supports that resemble a flat column - surrounds and cornices should be retained if they survive.

Fascias

The opportunity should be taken to return enlarged fascias - the area at the top of the shopfront where the sign is situated - to their original depth.

Materials

Where new work is required, traditional materials, eg timber should be used. Aluminium, tiles, mirrors, UPVC, laminates etc. are not generally appropriate.

Colours

Most buildings in the town centre date from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and therefore, it is appropriate to paint their shop-fronts in colours that were fashionable at the time. Such colours tended to be either neutral (browns and greys) or deep rich colours such as wines, greens, blues or even black.

These include the following British Standard (BS4800) colour equivalents:

Grey (*00A13*); Deep Plum (*02C40*); Beige/Brown (*08B17; 08B21; 08B25; 08B29*); Green/Grey/Browns (*10B21; 10B25; 10B29; 10C39*); Dark Olive (*12B25*); Dark Greens (*12B29; 14C40*) and Dark Blues (*18B29; 20C40*).

Pure white, purple, lilac, bright red, light blue, yellow, other light colours and pastels are not usually appropriate. Lower sections where staining can occur, often look best when painted a very dark colour such as black or slate grey.

Signage

Hand painted signs are preferred, but high quality applied lettering of a non-plastic or non-reflective materials can also be appropriate. Where a fascia board exists, lettering should be applied flush to the board and be no higher than four fifths of the height of the fascia board. Lettering should be limited to the minimum information relating to the shop and its service. Lettering should not be applied to any sub-fascia or other parts of the facade. Sponsored fascia signs are rarely appropriate unless they conform to the standards identified above. Projecting box signs should be avoided. Use of A-Board signage is not appropriate. Typically a minimum of 1.8 metres should be provided free from clutter at the front of shops at all times. In area of high footfall, such as George Street, a minimum of 3 metres is appropriate.

Window Advertisements

Covering the shop window with signs and advertisements does little for the street scene as a whole and such clutter should be avoided. An imaginative or simple window display can be more effective than a profusion of signs and bills posted behind the glass.



Illumination

Internally illuminated box signs applied to the fascia and projecting in front of the main plane of the shop front are not attractive elements in a traditional street scene and should be avoided. Where illumination is necessary it should, where possible, be in the form of well designed down lights illuminating a fascia board.

Security

Security measures, where necessary and approved, should be integrated into the original design of the shop front rather than stuck on. Flat shutters which cover the windows when closed, external boxes to contain roller shutters when open, alarm boxes, gates and grilles are unsympathetic and add an unattractive air to the street scene.

Alarm boxes should be fixed in inconspicuous positions on the facade. Solid shutters cause a dead and uninteresting appearance and should be avoided. An open mesh grille behind the glass is the preferred means of security. Where considered acceptable, external shutters should be of an open grille type. Some Scottish towns have benefited from bespoke security screens grafted in wrought metal and this approach would be highly appropriate in Bathgate.

Canopies

West Lothian Council should be consulted to assess whether canopies are appropriate. Where canopies are required, only retractable blinds of a traditional canvas type, without advertisements, lettering or images should be used. Curved Dutch canopies are not appropriate. The colour of the canopy should be selected to complement the rest of the shop front and typically a neutral colour should be used. (See **Colours** section for further guidance).

Contact details

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