



# West Lothian Villages

## Shop Front Improvement Guidance

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West Lothian  
Council

# Design Guidelines

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It is important to establish a strong and attractive shopfront scheme for our West Lothian villages, in order to support their promotion as a retailer and visitor destination. In doing so it is also important to ensure appropriate design and quality is achieved when undertaking shopfront alterations. Many shopfronts have been altered from their original state over times and even relatively modest proposals can have a positive effect in bringing a shopfront back to its original character.

It should be noted that works to shopfronts might need planning permission and/or a building warrant and the installation of advertisements/ signage may require advertisements 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 stallrisers – the part of the elevation filling the area between the shop window and the pavement – and sills should be retained if originals and treated simply in flat timber or render and coloured to match the rest of the shop front. The stallrisers 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 features 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 shop front where the sign is situated- to their original depth.



## Materials

Where new work is required traditional materials e.g. timber should be used. Aluminium, tiles, mirrors, PVC, laminates etc. are not generally appropriate. The use of plastic for any element of a shop front is rarely appropriate.

## Colours

In certain locations, usually heritage areas, careful selection of colour is important. Restrained shades of maroon, dark green, black, blue, brown and grey are more suitable, whilst lighter colours tend to appear intrusive and also quickly look dirty and need more frequent maintenance.

## Signage

Signs should be considered as an integral element of the design of a shop front. Hand painted signs are preferred, but high quality applied lettering of a non-plastic or non-reflective materials can also be effective.

The use of plastic fascia signs in conservation areas or listed buildings is rarely 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 façade.

Sponsored fascia signs are rarely appropriate unless they conform to the standards identified above.

Projecting box signs, whether illuminated or not, should be avoided.

## Hanging and Projecting Signage

In a conservation area traditional hanging signs can enhance the character and interest of historic areas. Especially attractive are symbols denoting the trade of the shop, such as butchers, barbers pole a teapot denoting a café. Hanging boards are also an established part of traditional streets.

## 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 downlighted illumination 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 roller shutters which cover the windows when closed, external boxes containing 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 an inconspicuous position in the façade.

The use of solid steel roller shutters, especially with a bare galvanized finish, create a dead and uninteresting appearance and should be avoided. An open mesh grill behind the glass is the preferred means of security. Where considered acceptable, external shutters should be of an open grille type.

Where additional protection measures are proposed to shop fronts, they should be transparent enough to allow the window display to be seen and to allow for light to diffuse through them onto the street.

## Canopies

Where canopies are required, only retractable blinds of a traditional canvas type without advertisements should be used. Curved Dutch canopies are not appropriate as they provide minimal shading and shelter.

Fripped pelmets around the base of the awnings and the use of primary colours on awning will not generally be acceptable with the conservation area.

### Contact details

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