

The Golden Mile

Shop Front Design Guide



December 2011

- ◆ This guidance aims to promote good shop front design along Leicester's Golden Mile (Belgrave / Melton Road) by showing the design standards required.
- ◆ Poor shop fronts can spoil the look of a street. It can spoil shopping experiences and damage public opinion of an area.
- ◆ Better shop fronts can increase business for both the individual shop and the street. It can lead to more investment, attracting more visitors and shoppers to the area.
- ◆ Good design and simple changes which respect the building and street will help to make Leicester's Golden Mile a more attractive and enjoyable shopping environment.
- ◆ Well-designed modern and traditional shop fronts can greatly add to the attractiveness of a street. This can be done by following some of the simple design advice set out in this guide.



◆ Typical elements of a shop front



The image above identifies some key features of a traditional shop front.

Many modern designs have the same features, as shown below.



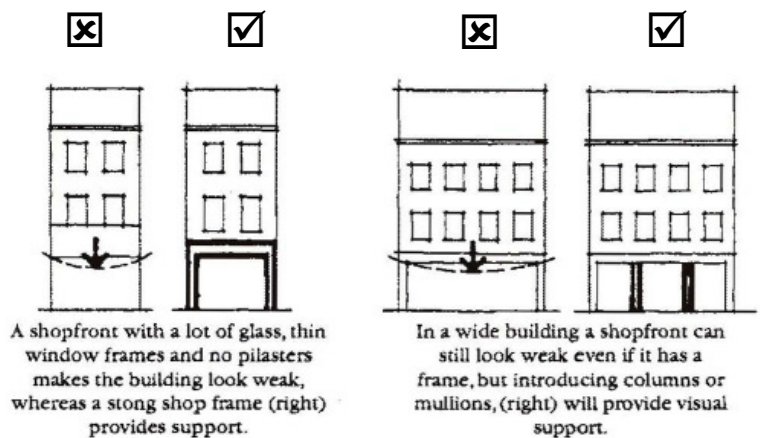
A wide variety of goods and services are provided along Belgrave/Melton Road, creating a lively area to shop. It is important that the activity and variety of the area is reflected in both traditional and modern shop front designs. Therefore, creative and original proposals that have some features of the traditional shop front are welcomed.

◆ Respecting the building and streetscape

- ◆ Efforts should be made to re-integrate a shop front with the proportions and design of the building it is located in.



- ◆ Ground floors should look well supported. This principle should also apply across two or more buildings.



A shopfront with a lot of glass, thin window frames and no pilasters makes the building look weak, whereas a strong shop frame (right) provides support.

In a wide building a shopfront can still look weak even if it has a frame, but introducing columns or mullions, (right) will provide visual support.

Lack of visual support in an individual building

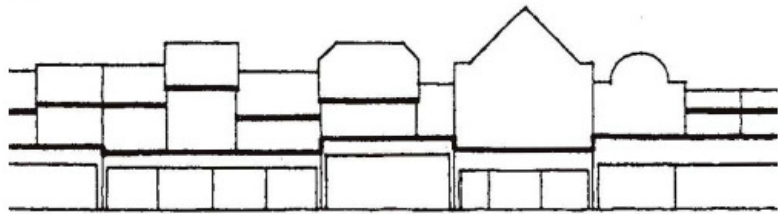


Lack of apparent support underneath the party wall makes these two buildings look unstable.

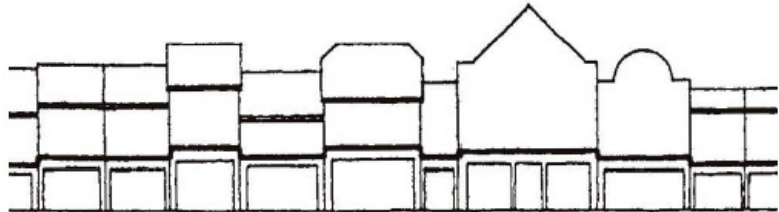
Two separate shopfronts overcome the problem and also reinstate the vertical rhythm of the buildings.

Lack of visual support across two or more buildings

- ◆ It is important to consider the street pattern. Changes should reflect the rhythm of the buildings in the street.



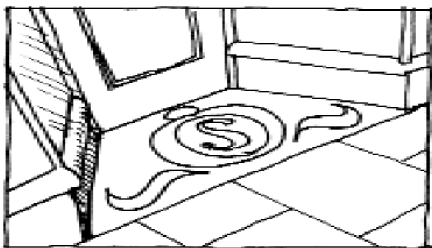
Loss of rhythm. Continuous fascias across several buildings impose horizontal emphasis on the streetscape.



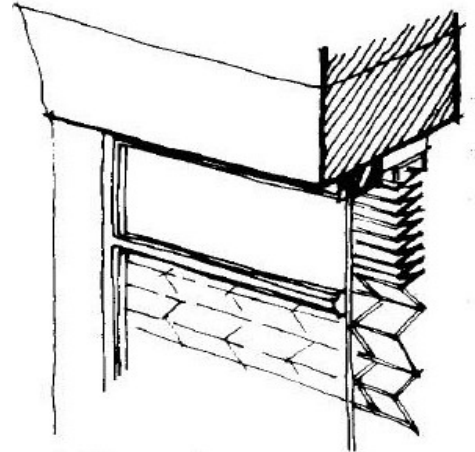
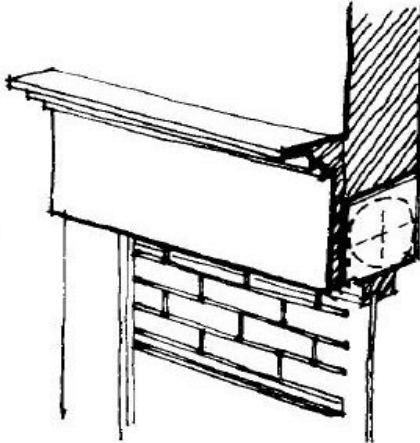
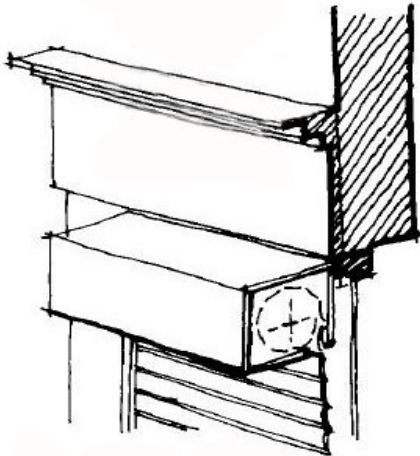
Restored rhythm. Subdividing the individual shopfronts, and varying their height and depth to suit the scale of the buildings, reinstates the vertical rhythm of the buildings and street.

Maintaining streetscape rhythm

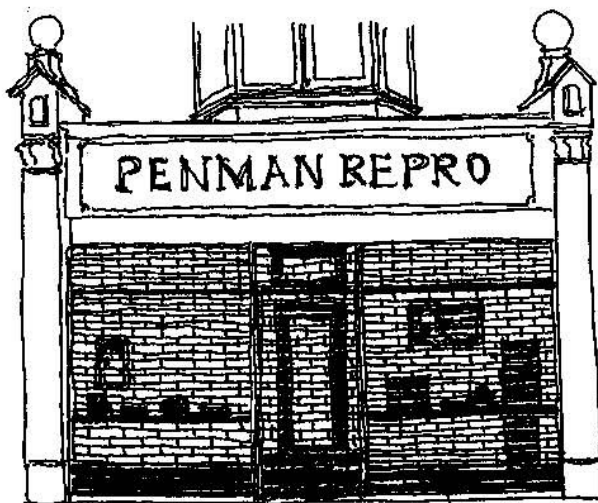
- ◆ Careful thought should be given to retaining and enhancing any features of interest or character.



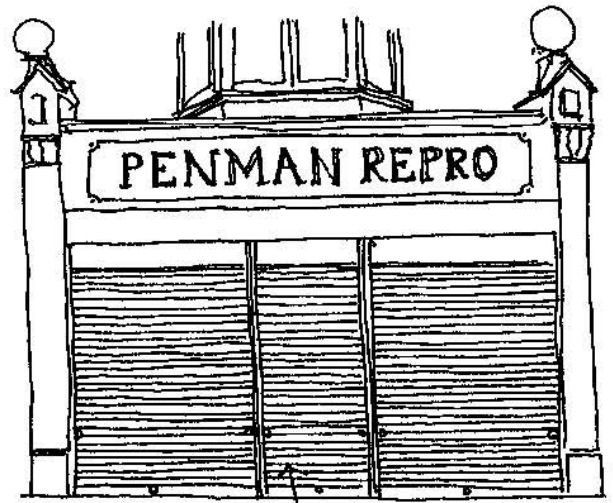
◆ Security and Shutters



- The design of shutters and fittings is important. Poor shutters and fittings can harm the appearance of a shop and make the area appear unfriendly, particularly after dark.



Open grilles allow the shop display to be seen outside opening hours



Avoid solid shutters

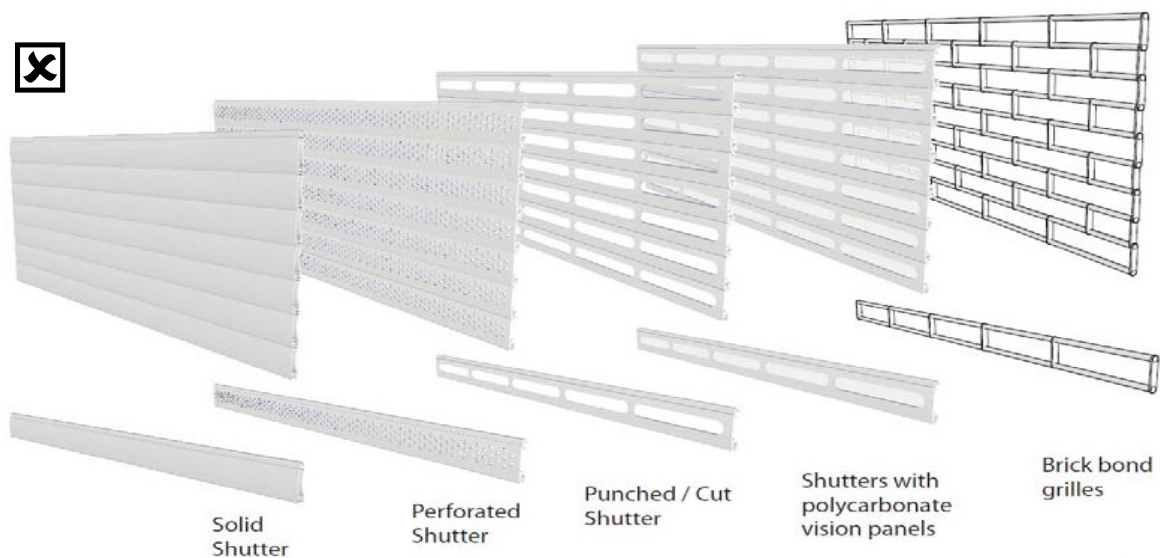
- Solid shutters dominate shop fronts and have a harsh, unwelcoming appearance. They are more likely to attract graffiti and encourage vandalism. Planning permission is needed to install or replace any form of external shutters.



- Internal lattice, trellis or brick bond shutters, located behind the glass do not require planning permission.
- When the shop is closed, good internal lighting deters crime, improves the night time appearance of the street and encourages window shopping.



◆ External Shutter Design



Generally not acceptable



Generally acceptable

◆ Signs

Facia Signs

- The fascia should be in-keeping with the building. As a general rule, the depth of the fascia should not be more than a quarter of the height from pavement level to the underside of the fascia.
- Clear well-spaced letters are as easy to read as larger oversized letters. Careful consideration should be given to contrasting colours for easier reading.
- Letters should mainly be restricted to the shop name. Images of products should not be put on facia.



A WELL PROPORTIONED FASCIA EMPHASIZES OTHER DETAILS.

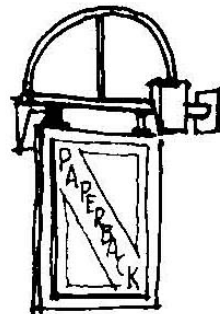
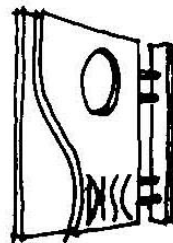
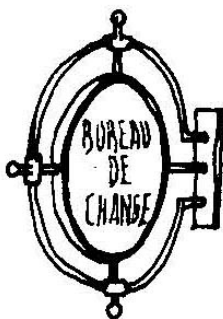
LARGE FASCIAS OBSCURE THE FIRST FLOOR WINDOWS AND IMPORTANT ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS



Projecting/ Hanging Signs

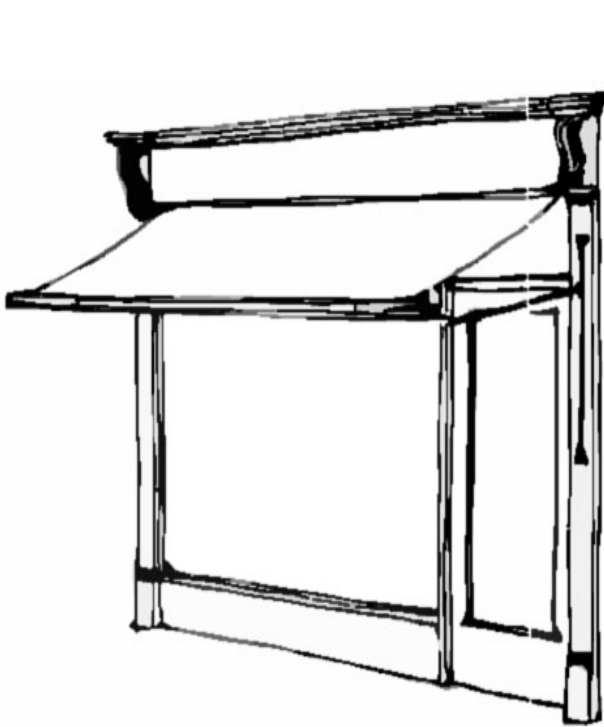


- Hanging or projecting signs should be located at fascia level. Higher signs of any description will only be considered under exceptional circumstances.
- Good examples of modern projecting sign designs.

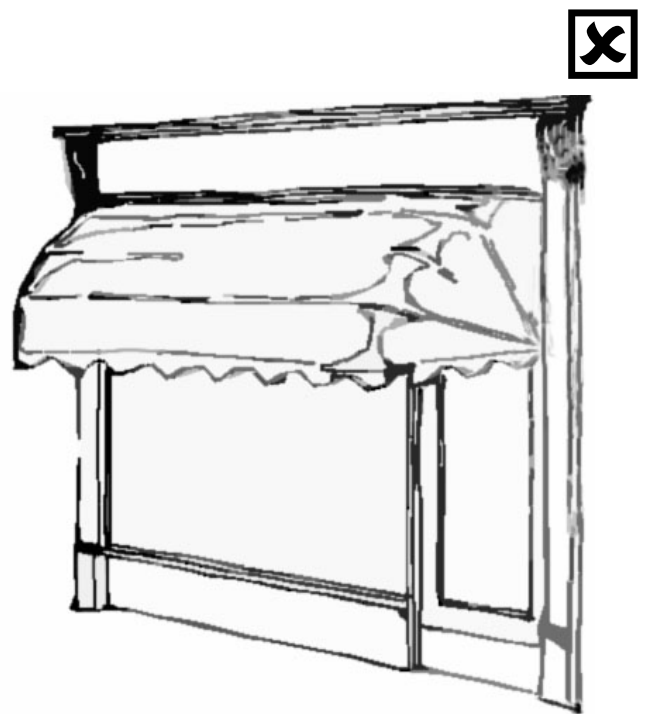


◆ Canopies and Awnings

- Improvements should consider replacing Dutch, balloon or plastic canopies with fabric roller blinds.



Fabric roller blinds are more suitable and should be located in a recessed box below the fascia.



Avoid the use of plastic blinds as they often take away from a building's appearance. They can also quickly lose colour and are easily damaged.



◆ Access for all



- Entrances should be designed to be easy and safe for **everyone** to use. This includes people with mobility and sight difficulties, older people, young children, and people with prams and pushchairs.
- A number of access improvements can be considered, depending on the individual case. Please seek advice on access improvements at an early stage (See contact details at the back of this booklet).

◆ Small changes can have a big impact!

- Shop owners/occupants can make major improvements to their shops by taking small measures to improve tidiness.

- Avoid window stickers, sales banners or posters, both at upper levels and on windows.

- Banners on upper levels often have an untidy appearance, as do alarm boxes and satellite dishes.



- Stickers on windows obstruct views into the shop. Un-obstructed windows make shops much more inviting and encourage customers into the store to have a look around and purchase goods.



- **How can the City Council help?**

If you are thinking of improving or replacing your shop front, you should:

1. Think about the changes you would like to make in light of this document.
2. Contact Leicester City Council to organise a discussion before a planning application is submitted. At this meeting you will receive free advice on the planning process, shop front design and any possible funding.

- **Contact**

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