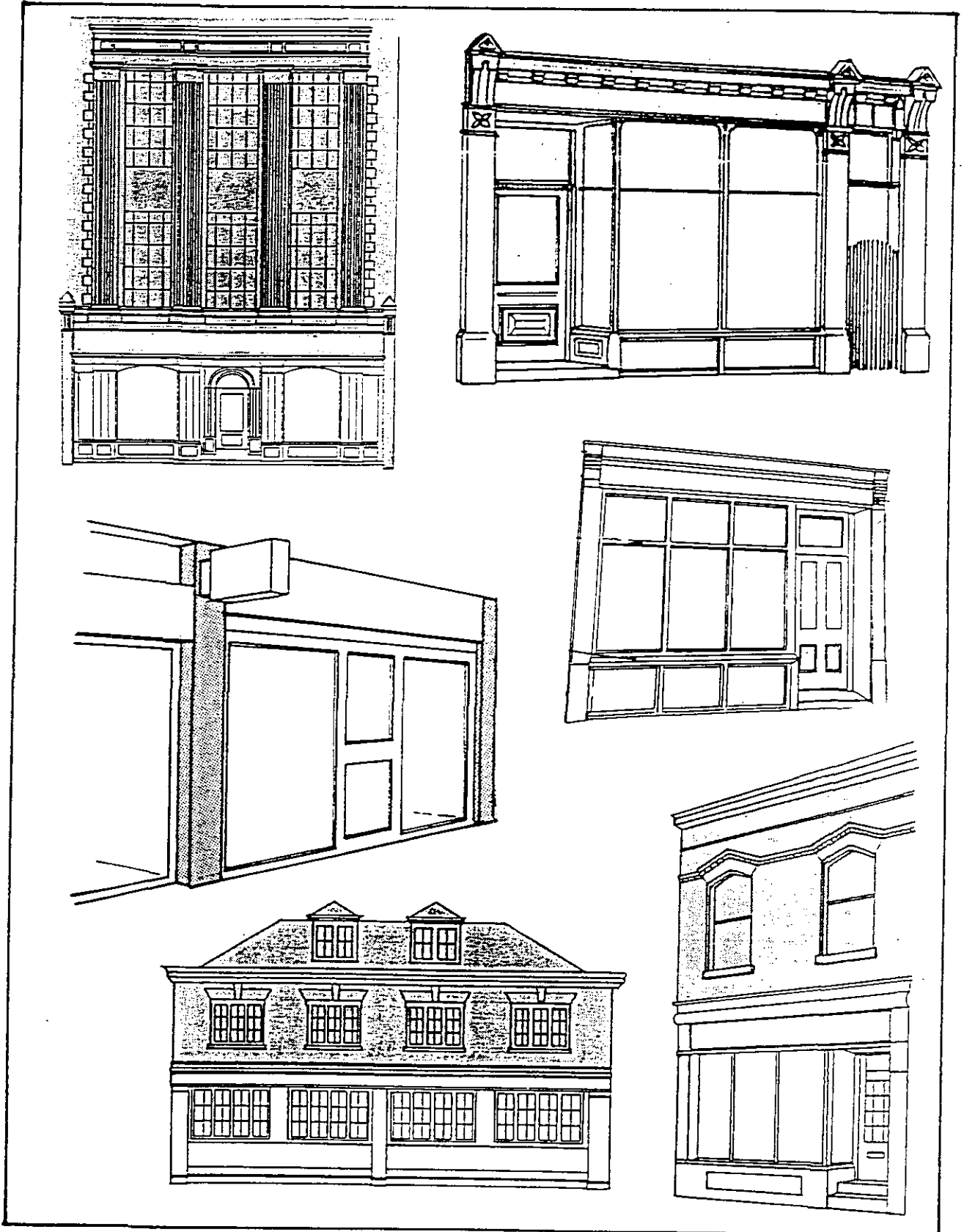


PLANNING GUIDELINES

Shop Fronts





TRAFFORD

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING GUIDELINES - SHOP FRONTS **APPROVED JULY, 1997 FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

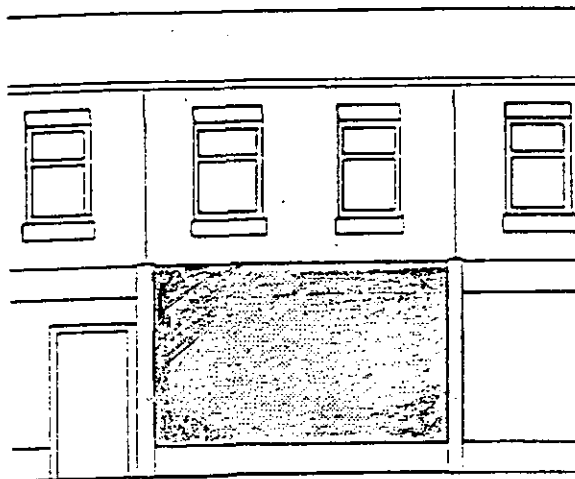
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2. ACCEPTABLE SIGNAGE/DISPLAY AREA

The aim of the guidelines is to allow for the varied display and advertising requirements of individual shops. To achieve this without the numerous different styles looking chaotic when viewed together, some simple limits are required. Figure 2 shows this diagrammatically.

Fig. 2



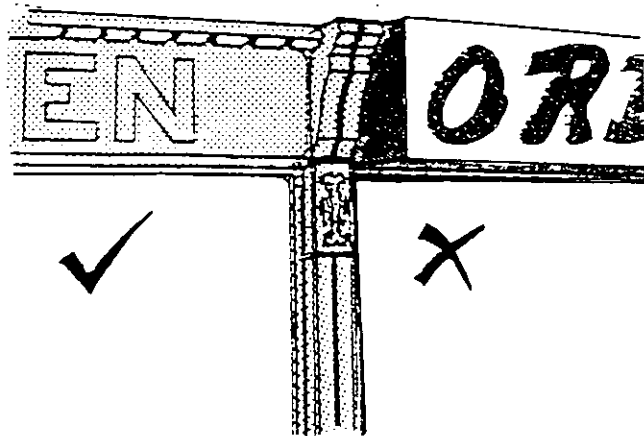
Acceptable signage / display area (shown shaded)

The main features are that the signage/display area should be:-

- (a) **Not too high.** The top should be below the level of the bottom of the first floor windows, and not above the tops of neighbouring fascias. If the fascia sign is too high it will look too large and over-dominant.
- (b) **Not too wide.** It should leave space for a pilaster or part of the building structure at each side between it and next door. This separation helps different shop fronts and signs next to each other to look well because they are set within a framework. It helps the shop front to relate better to the rest of the building above as the pilasters provide visual support and continuity.

- (c) **Not too low.** A solid base ("stallriser") of at least 450mm (1ft 6in) should be provided. This helps to make the shop front relate better to the rest of the building by providing a visual base (see Section 9 for further details).
- (d) **Not too far forward.** Box or fascia signs should not project forward of the pillar or pilaster at the side. Ready made boxed signs bolted on to the front of the fascia often look crude and obscure the visual effects of the side pillars or pilasters. Shop front design and construction should allow for signs and security shutter boxes to be accommodated without coming forward of the pilasters.
- (e) **Not too small or non-existent.** Non-shop uses such as banks, betting shops and restaurants and even some shops may not require a large display area but if they are in a shopping frontage they should provide at least some glazing or display, in order to appear appropriate and to add to the vitality of the shopping area in which they are situated.

Fig. 3



*Fascia sign should be in plane with the window (left)
rather than coming forward of the pilaster (right)*

3. DESIGN

- 3.1 **The design should have regard to the appearance of the rest of the building. Identical frontage treatment should not be extended across buildings of different characters. Display window treatment should not clash with upper floor window styles.** (Possibilities are to have a similar style, to go for simplicity, or to create similar proportions by appropriate subdivision) main display window vertical subdivisions should match the pattern of solid to window on the upper floor.
- 3.2 For small shop fronts simplicity can work better than a complicated arrangement of glazing subdivisions. For larger shop fronts a very wide undivided expanse of glazing usually looks awkward and some vertical subdivision is advisable.
- 3.3 Plain shop fronts can look appropriate in plain modern buildings but the result can sometimes be rather boring. There are examples nearby in most parts of the Borough of how attractive a shop front can be. Elaboration will need a little more thought but can be worthwhile. On the other hand adding different features with no common style can create an unsightly jumble.

4. COLOUR

- 4.1 **The colours of the shop front (including fascia background, woodwork, frames, door, stallriser, etc.) should form an attractive colour scheme and one which is in keeping with the rest of the building above.** A single overall dark colour often works well, as does all white. Schemes with two colours usually work best when one of the colours is a neutral such as white or cream. The use of two strong contrasting colours together or three or more colours should usually be avoided.

5. MATERIALS

- 5.1 **Careful consideration should be given to the choice of all materials to be used.** A good quality soft wood is often the most suitable material for most of the shop front, particularly for older buildings and can easily be repainted if the shop requires a change of appearance. Aluminium can often provide an acceptable substitute if finished in a colour to suit the overall colour scheme of the shop. Grey anodised aluminium framing is functional, but its finish is not very attractive, does not contribute positively to most colour schemes and is best kept for the smallest and simplest shop fronts. Stallrisers materials are discussed at 9.1.
- 5.2 **For Conservation Areas the use of grey anodised aluminium framing or shiny/reflective plastics for shop fronts or fascias will not usually be acceptable.** Materials used must reflect the age and architectural style of the building.
- 5.3 For fascia signs matt/non-reflective materials look best and are easier to read. **Avoid shiny plastic/acrylic finishes which can be difficult to read and tend to look out of place,** particularly on traditional shop fronts.

6. RETAINING VALUABLE FEATURES

- 6.1 **The removal or obscuring of any high quality architectural features of a shop front or building which are worthy of retention will not normally be acceptable.** High quality architectural features such as projecting consoles/corbels, fluted pilasters, detailed brickwork, etc. make an important contribution to the character and appearance of older buildings. A good design will incorporate any features worthy of retention into the new scheme.
- 6.2 **There will be a particular presumption against the replacement of any original Victorian or Edwardian shop fronts or details.** Original Victorian or Edwardian shop fronts are rare in Trafford and the retention of remaining examples is to be encouraged wherever possible. If the shop front is in a poor state of repair, or has been unsympathetically altered in the past, a good quality replacement may be acceptable.

7. ACCESSIBLE ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 **Shops should be accessible to as wide a range of customers as possible, including wheelchair users and people with prams/pushchairs.** This is in retailers interests and the public interest.
- 7.2 The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 requires disabled access to be provided, "so far as it is in the circumstances both practicable and reasonable" to buildings, including shops, where the public are admitted. Additionally, the Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) states that the Council will seek to ensure that where appropriate (in workplaces and buildings to which the public has access) new developments provide suitable access for people with disabilities (Proposal D1 (ix)).
- 7.3 The minimum clear open width of a doorway for wheelchair access is 800mm, with 830mm preferred. Ideally there should be either a level or ramped access to the premises. **Steps should not be introduced where none existed before.** For further details see how the Council's leaflet 'Designing for Everyone'.

8. FASCIA SIGNS

- 8.1 **Any shop front proposal should make provision for a fascia sign of acceptable size and location.** Fascia signs should comply with the Council's Planning Guidelines - Advertisements (July 1998) to which reference should be made. An extract is printed at 8.4 below.
- 8.2 A common fault is the fascia being too deep, making the sign look too large and dominant. **Fascias deeper than 20% of the total shop front height will usually look too deep and so will not normally be acceptable.** There may be exceptions, for instance some large scale modern buildings might be suitable for a larger sign. In some cases even 20% will look too large and out of character with the building and its neighbours and lesser depth will be necessary. Any proposed increase in fascia depth will normally be looked at critically.

8.3 **The fascia sign should not come forward of the plane of the shop front or any side pillar or pilaster** - see section 2(d) and Figure 3. Nor should it be too wide or too high - see sections 2 (a) and 2 (b).

8.4 Extract from the Council's Planning Guidelines - Advertisements:-

"Shop Fascia Signs

- a) Fascia signs should normally be compatible with neighbouring fascias in their position, height and depth and should not extend to the bottom of any first floor window sill.
- b) The depth of fascia signs should be less than 20% of the total shop front height: signs over 20% will usually look too deep and so will not normally be acceptable.
- c) The fascia sign should be in the same plane as the main part of the shop and should not come forward of any side pillar or pilaster.
- d) Signs that would remove or cover over features of the original detail and style of the building should be avoided, especially where the premises form part of a block or terrace of related or similar design.
- e) A proposed fascia sign should normally relate to only one shop or business unit: signs linking across two or more shop fronts that are likely to obscure building features or to inappropriately link buildings of different characters will not normally be allowed."

9. **STALLRISERS**

9.1 **Shop fronts should normally include solid (not glazed) stallrisers of a minimum height of 450mm (1ft 6ins).** Stallrisers materials should either be the same as the facing material for the buildings upper floors, or be a matching part of the shop front. The stallriser (see Figure 1) is a traditional part of the shop front design providing part of the 'frame' for the shop display (and lifting it up to a more visible height), and has the practical use of protecting the glazing from splashes and knocks. Any applications which would result in the loss of a stallriser in favour of glazing will normally be resisted.

9.2 Certain modern developments such as the Arndale Centre, Stretford, and the northern end of George Street, Altrincham have been designed with only minimal stallrisers and continuation of this style in these areas will normally be acceptable.

10. SECURITY

- 10.1 Care should be taken in the design of any new shop front to incorporate the need for security in a satisfactory way.
- 10.2 Some designs of shop fronts whilst providing an attractive appearance for customers are vulnerable to burglary. The later bolting on of external shutters, for instance, if security proves to be a problem, will not necessarily be acceptable (see Section 11).
- 10.3 Items which may be worth considering for incorporation within the shop front design include:-
- substantial stallrisers;
 - substantial mullions;
 - limits on the undivided width of window glass;
 - provision for the installation of internal shutters.
- 10.4 Other items which may assist security include secure doors and locks, good lighting, alarms, and surveillance systems. Advice on security may be available from the Police Community Safety Officers.

11. SECURITY SHUTTERS

- 11.1 When considering planning applications for security shutters the Council will have regard to the following criteria:
- the need for additional security;
 - whether the need could be met in some more visually acceptable way;
 - the design and colour of the proposed shutter;
 - the visual effects on the surrounding area.

Any external shutters permitted will normally be required to have a factory applied paint finish in a colour appropriate to the remainder of the building and its surroundings. External roller shutters will only exceptionally be acceptable on Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas.

- 11.2 External roller shutters often detract from the design of the building and the character of the area. Solid shutters with a plain galvanised finish are particularly unattractive. Solid shutters prevent natural surveillance of the shop's interior and replace a shop's display area with dead space. A projecting shutter box may also spoil the frontage appearance. If the use of such shutters were to become common in a shopping area, the resulting fortified appearance would significantly reduce the area's attractiveness, and increase the general crime level, to the disbenefit of retailers as well as the public. Nor do external shutters necessarily prevent burglaries.
- 11.3 Internal roller shutters, which do not normally need planning permission, are far more visually acceptable and are also considered to be as effective or more effective in preventing burglary than an external shutter. The use of lattice type internal shutters enables natural surveillance to be retained of the interior. The use of solid shutters behind the window display would prevent natural surveillance but would retain an attractive appearance and still enable window shopping to occur.

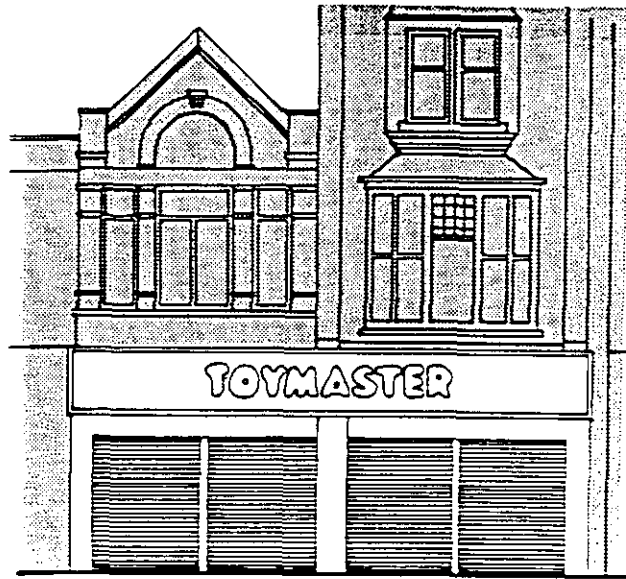
- 11.4 Other possibilities for increased security are referred to in section 10.
- 11.5 Applicants for external shutters in any area will therefore normally be encourage to look at alternative means of security. Frontages in the town and district shopping centres are particularly subject to loss of visual amenity from inappropriate shutters. This is because these centres play an important part in forming the image of the area and they are the focus for a range of activities which continue outside normal shopping hours. However the Council acknowledges that some shops retaining high value items may be at particularly high risk, and alternative means of security may not always be feasible.
- 11.6 Of the various shutter types the lattice type is the least visually harmful. The perforated type has some through visibility at night when internal lights are on. Solid shutters have the most visual impact. There are no cases when a galvanised or aluminium finish is likely to be necessary or appropriate, and a factory applied paint finish should be used. Motifs to assist with advertising the premises could be incorporated. Dark or deep colours are normally best, chosen to harmonise with the shop front or fascia sign or the building concerned. Bright colours should, however, be avoided.
- 11.7 In Conservation Areas external shutters will normally be out of character and will only be considered if there is clear evidence of the premises being of exceptionally high risk and if it is clear that all other security options such as internal shutters are not feasible. In such cases the visual consequences for the character of the area will still need to be carefully weighed. If a planning permission is granted in such cases, it may be made personal to the owner and may be for a temporary period only, to avoid the perpetuation of shutters if the premises change hands and becomes no longer high risk, and ensure that shutters whose appearance deteriorates are not allowed to remain indefinitely.

12. SUBMITTING A PLANNING APPLICATION

To avoid any unnecessary delays with the processing of your planning application, the application drawings must show sufficient information to enable the Council to assess the proposal accurately. In particular the drawings should show the front view of the existing and proposed shop fronts, including their relationship with the upper floors of the building and with adjacent fascias. They should include a cross section and notes on proposed materials. There are separate forms for signs and sign illumination details. For application forms and queries contact the Engineering and Planning Department at Trafford Town Hall, Stretford on 0161 912 1212.

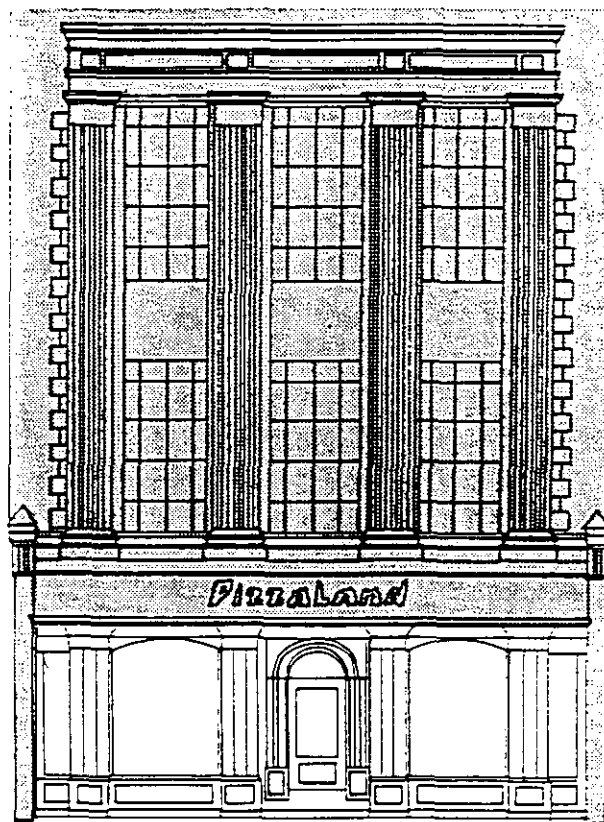
13. ILLUSTRATED EXAMPLES

Fig. 4



Identical frontage treatment extended across building of different character, spoiling their character. Solid roller shutters give an area a "fortified" appearance.

Fig. 5



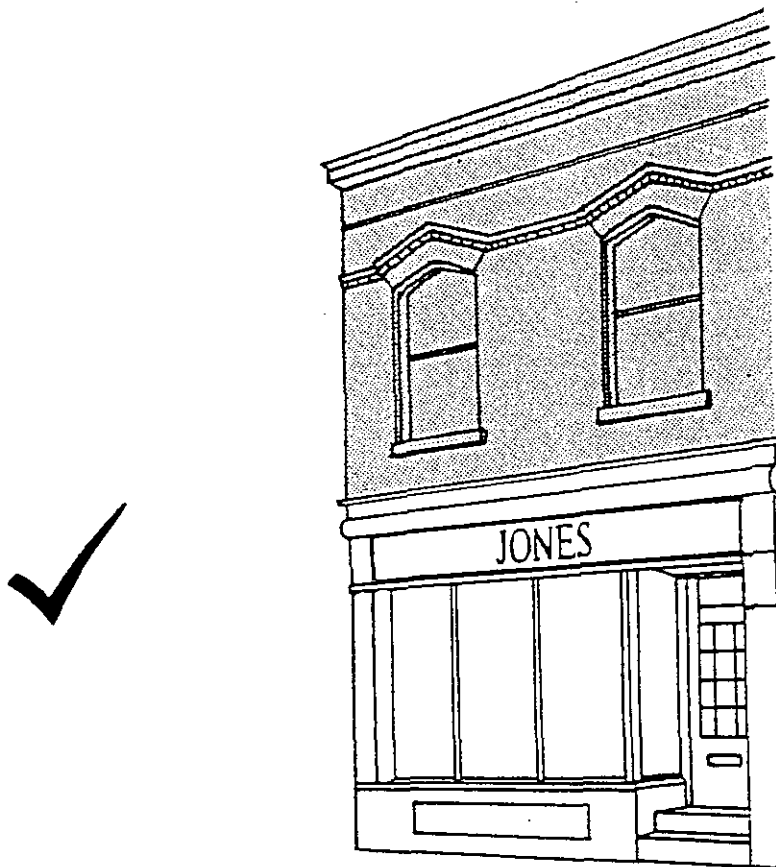
Vertical subdivisions of the shop front relate well to the features on the upper floors. Shop front (including stallriser) has attractive unified design and sits within the original stone pilasters at either side.

Fig. 6



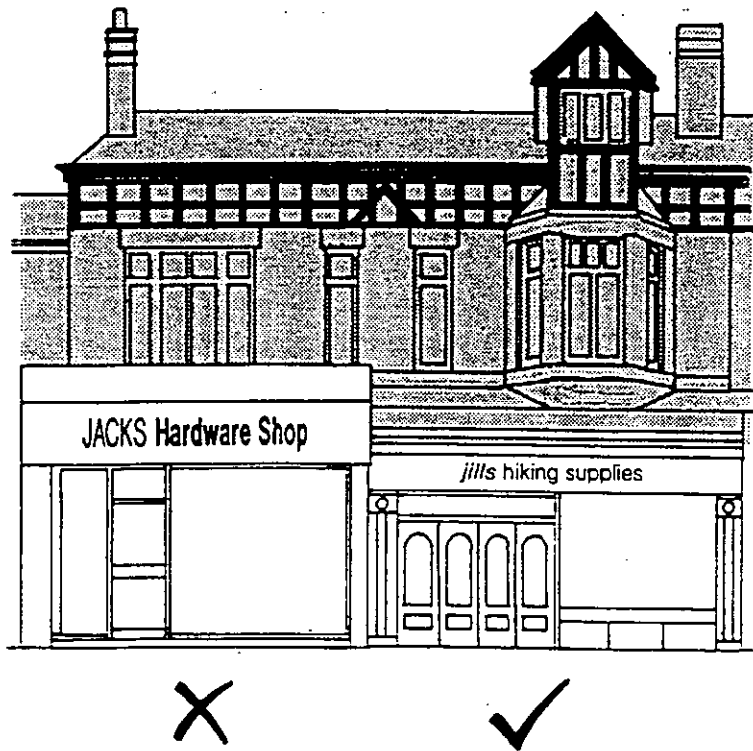
Shop front designed as an integral part of the building.

Fig. 7



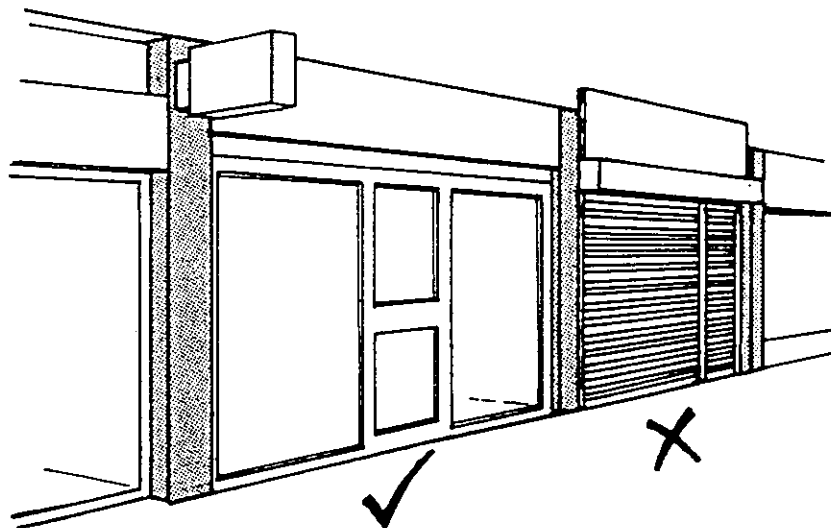
Simple proportions of the shop front relate well to the building. Poor disabled access is not an unusual problem with older buildings.

Fig. 8



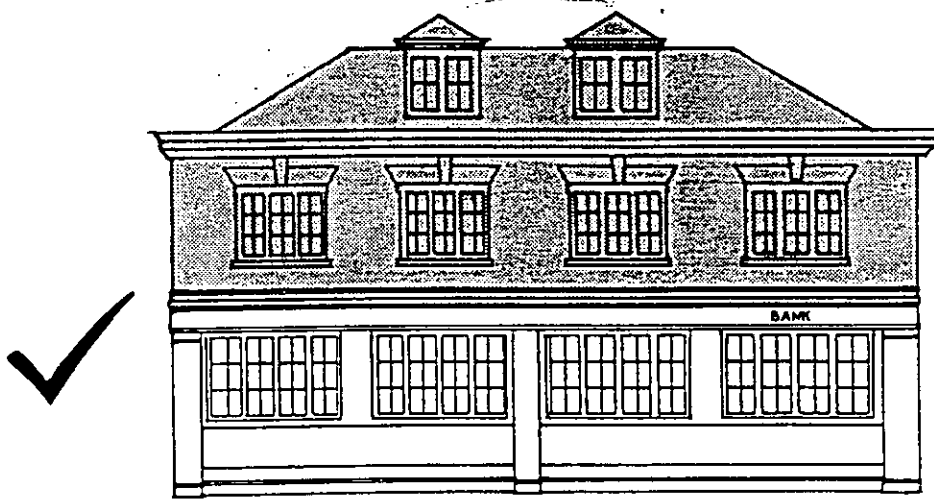
The top of the fascia should be well below the first floor window sill, as on the shop on the right. A stallriser should normally be incorporated. Over large fascias (left) look too dominant.

Fig. 9



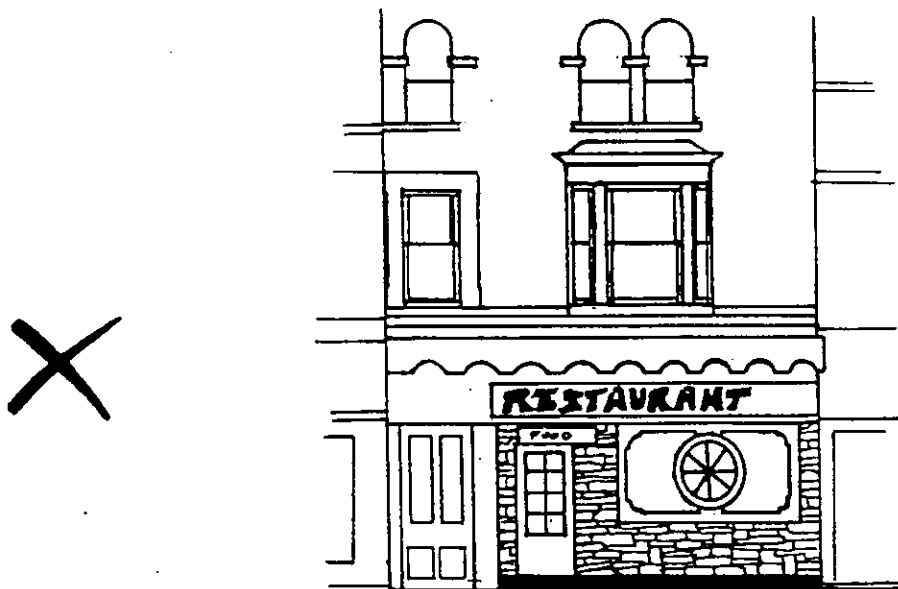
Modern building with fascia signs neatly separated by vertical structural elements. However the fascia sign on the right looks out of place because it is located higher than its neighbours, and the projecting shutter box and solid roller shutters look unattractive. Not having a stallriser on a modern building can be acceptable, as in this case.

Fig. 10



Attractive frontage provided by a bank by matching the ground floor window style to the upper floor.

Fig. 11



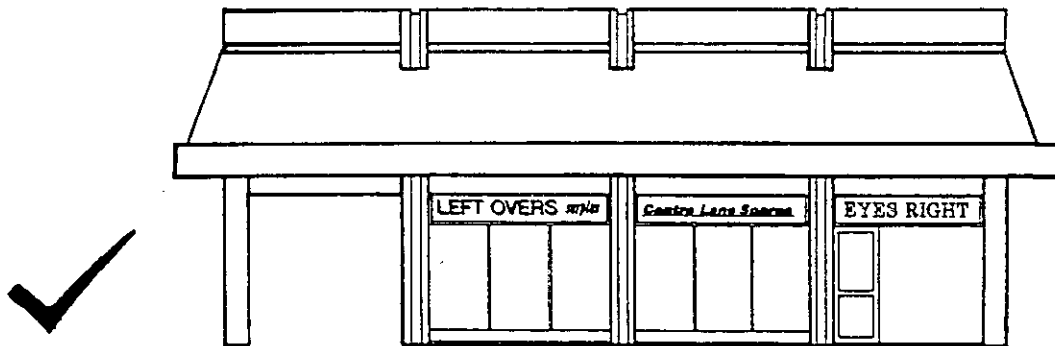
Adding different features with no common style, and a mixture of materials, creates an unsightly jumble.

Fig. 12



Original Victorian or Edwardian shop fronts are rare in Trafford and the retention of remaining examples is to be encouraged wherever possible

Fig. 13



Modern shop front units with glazing divided vertically to reduce its scale. Fascia signs are of an acceptable depth and divided by structural features. In this case the end result is, however, a little bland.