

Pembrokeshire County Council  
**Cyngor Sir Penfro**



Pembrokeshire Coast National Park  
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Supplementary Planning Guidance

**Shopfront Design**

Consultation Draft 2011

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## Contents

<b>1.0</b>	Introduction	Pg. 2
<b>2.0</b>	Design Principles	Pg. 3
<b>3.0</b>	Retaining Existing Shopfronts	Pg. 3
<b>4.0</b>	Replacement Shopfront	Pg. 4
<b>5.0</b>	Modern Shopfronts	Pg. 4
<b>6.0</b>	The Character of the Street	Pg. 5
<b>7.0</b>	The Building	Pg. 5
<b>8.0</b>	Detailed Design Elements	Pg. 5
<b>9.0</b>	Advertisements and Signs	Pg. 7
<b>10.0</b>	Illuminations	Pg. 8
<b>11.0</b>	Colour	Pg. 9
<b>12.0</b>	Canopies and Blinds	Pg. 9
<b>13.0</b>	Disabled Access	Pg. 9
<b>14.0</b>	Shopfront Security	Pg. 9
<b>Appendix 1. Glossary of Technical Terms</b>		<b>Pg. 13</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

**1.1** This Supplementary Planning Guidance has been produced in order to promote high quality design standards for shopfronts. It is aimed at encouraging developers and applicants to consider design matters at the earliest stage of their proposals.

**1.2** This document covers the whole of Pembrokeshire including the National Park. It provides detailed information for new shopfronts and existing shopfronts. The basic design principles are relevant to all shopfronts and advertisement designs. The guide does not seek to impose wholly traditional shopfronts or a standard design solution on every retail unit, or to remove flexibility for innovation and flair, but does promote a restoration of the traditional character of most shopping streets, where this has been diluted over the years.

**1.3** The success and competitiveness of the county's town centres depends, in part, on improving the image and attractiveness of shopping streets for residents and visitors alike.

### The Policy Context

**1.4** The planning policy context for making decisions on planning applications is provided by national and local planning policy. National planning policy is contained within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 3) and Technical Advice Notes. Local planning policy is contained within 'The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority Local Development Plan' for the National Park and the 'Joint Unitary Development Plan' for the remainder of Pembrokeshire.

### National Planning Policy

**1.5** Planning Policy Wales (Edition 3) July 2010<sup>1</sup> outlines the importance of sustainable design and identifies 5 key aspects of good design

- Ensuring ease of access for all.
- Sustaining or enhancing local character. Promoting legible development, promoting a successful relation between public and private space. Promoting quality, choice and variety. Promoting innovative design.
- Ensuring attractive, safe public places. Security through natural surveillance
- Achieving efficient use and protection of natural resources. Enhancing biodiversity. Designing for Change.
- Promoting sustainable means of travel.

Technical Advice Note 7 'Outdoor Advertisement Control' and Technical Advice Note 12 'Design' also support the provision of detailed shopfront design guidance.

### Local Planning Policy

#### Pembrokeshire County Council Joint Unitary Development Plan (JUDP)

**1.6** The Joint Unitary Development Plan remains the adopted development plan for Pembrokeshire excluding the National Park<sup>2</sup>. This guidance is supplementary to Policies 7 'Quality of Design', 33 'Shop Front', 76 'Design' of the JUDP.

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<sup>1</sup> National planning policy in Planning Policy Wales and Technical Advice Notes are produced by the Welsh Assembly Government.

<sup>2</sup> Pembrokeshire County Council is preparing a Local Development Plan which is expected to be adopted in 2013. When it is adopted it will replace the JUDP.

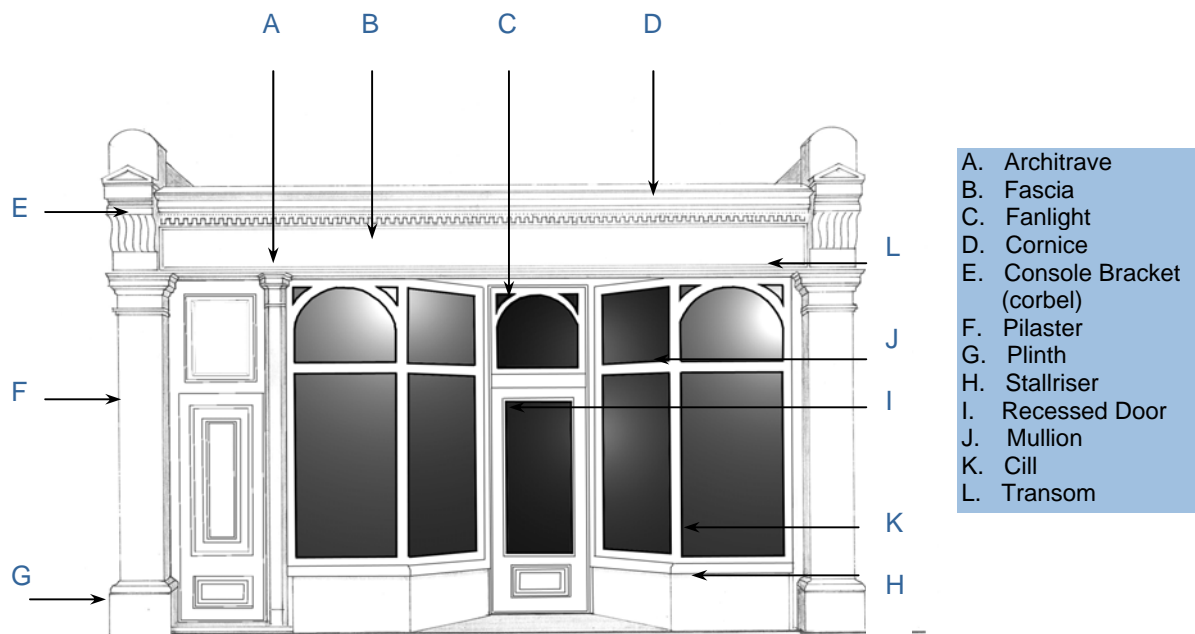
## Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan (LDP)

1.7 The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Local Development Plan was adopted by the Authority in September 2010. This guidance is in particular, supplementary to Policies 8 'Special Qualities', 14 'Protection of Buildings of Local Importance' and 29 'Sustainable Design'.

1.8 This Supplementary Planning Guidance will be a material consideration in the determination of appropriate planning applications.

## 2.0 Design Principles

2.1 **Good design is good business: shopfronts have a major impact on a places character. Poorly designed shopfronts are bad for trade and detract from an area – good design is a good advertisement. The various elements of a typical shopfront are illustrated below.**



*Elements of a shopfront*

2.2 The design of a shopfront will be most effective if it considers the whole building and not just the display window within the streetscape. The character of the surrounding area should also be considered.

2.3 Traditional shopfronts should always be repaired, or reinstated where altered. High quality modern design is generally appropriate for modern buildings and can also be a more appropriate solution for historic buildings than 'pastiche'.

## 3.0 Retaining Existing Shopfronts

3.1 Where the existing shopfront contributes to the character of the building or the area, it should normally be repaired rather than replaced. Often, some details such as a cornice or

brackets survive and should be repaired or replicated. Old photographs can be helpful in reinstating historic detail.

**3.2** In some cases (e.g. Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas), grant aid may be available for repairs or reinstatement.

**3.3** The removal or unsympathetic alteration to historic shopfronts on Listed Buildings or buildings which make a contribution to the overall character of the Conservation Area in which it is sited will not be permitted.

## 4.0 Replacement Shopfronts

**4.1** The general aim of this policy is to ensure that any investment made in shops reinforces the traditional quality and image of shopping areas and in particular those located in Conservation Areas.

**4.2** When applications for planning permission are made to replace or alter a shopfront, the replacement of poor quality shopfronts by more appropriate designs will be encouraged.

**4.3** Replacement shopfronts should reflect the design of the original (old photographs can be useful). Where it exists, traditional details such as corbels or pilasters should be incorporated or replicated 'like for like'.

**4.4** Where historic interior features survive such as cornices, fireplaces and joinery, there will be a presumption in favour of their retention.

**4.5** Steel columns to support the upper floors were traditionally employed and are acceptable providing that they relate well to structural members of the shopfront itself.

## 5.0 Modern Shopfronts

**5.1** Modern design can produce innovative, individual and eye catching shopfronts. However proposals for modern shopfronts in historic areas, such as Conservation Areas should follow the broad design principles and considerations contained in this guide to ensure a high standard of design is achieved that enhances the street scene.

**5.2** Modern shopfronts should be of high architectural quality, with particular consideration being made to scale, massing, context, and the use of appropriate materials which draw out local distinctiveness.

**5.3** Modern design can be used to good effect where shopfronts are integrated into a new development with a consistent design principle running throughout. Any new retail development should always respond to the character of the whole area, as well as adjacent buildings and seek to preserve and enhance its surroundings.

**5.4** Shopfronts of modern design can also be successfully incorporated into traditional facades if respect is paid to the architectural form of the building and its surroundings.

## 6.0 The Character Of The Street

**6.1** The design of a shopfront should take into account the rhythm and characteristics of the street as well as the proportions of the building itself. The majority of shops traditionally occupy narrow frontages giving a vertical rhythm two or three windows wide, with shopfronts of varying rather than uniform designs.

**6.2** Exceptions to this policy would include a terrace of shops designed as a single composition or Victorian 'emporium' style shops which occupy wider or multiple frontages and sometimes upper floors too.

**6.3** New shopfronts which extend over two or more buildings and ignore the rhythm of the streetscape will not be acceptable. The character and identity of each building should be retained e.g. by using individual shopfronts/windows.

**6.4** Not every shopfront follows the typical pilaster-and-cornice design. Many shops evolved from domestic front rooms, either retaining the original doors and windows or providing a small shop window, relying on modest signage for custom. The provision of formal shopfronts in such cases is rarely appropriate.

## 7.0 The Building

**7.1** There are no shopfronts in Pembrokeshire predating the late 1700s, when shops typically had small-paned bow windows, a design much reproduced in the 1960s and 70s. By the early 1800s, shopfronts became larger and symmetrical, articulated with pilasters or columns. Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts were similarly composed, with more elaborate detailing and increasingly, large plate-glass windows.

**7.2** In many cases, shopfronts were inserted into earlier buildings and replacement/new shopfronts should respect this 'continuity' rather than to attempt an earlier pastiche.

**7.3** A well designed shopfront should combine careful design and materials which respect the scale and character of its host building.

**7.4** Pilasters, fascia, cornice and stallriser should be used to enclose the shop window and entrance rather like a picture frame that sets off a painting.

**7.5** Pilasters identify the vertical division between the shopfronts; the fascia provides the space for advertising; the cornice gives a strong line at the top of the shopfront and offers protection from the weather; the stallriser gives protection at ground level and provides a solid base; and all of these elements form a frame which suggests, visually, a method of support for the building façade above. These principles are as valid for new shops as for traditional ones. Proposals for 'modern' shopfront designs, which do not involve loss of existing traditional features, may be acceptable if the traditional frame or fascia, corbel and pilaster are retained or re-introduced.

## 8.0 Detailed Design Elements

### Windows and Doors

**8.1** A skilled design will enhance the building and attract customers. Windows should be looked through and not at; window stickers should be avoided – the emphasis should be on an attractive display of the goods themselves.

**8.2** Door and window patterns should reflect the traditional design of the area. Small-paned windows are appropriate to earlier buildings and larger plate-glass windows for later Victorian and Edwardian ones.

**8.3** Glazing should be emphasized vertically rather than horizontally, matching the proportions of the building above and should normally be set flush with the front of the building. Only in exceptional cases (e.g. butchers shops) were opening windows provided.

**8.4** In most cases, traditional timber construction (using timber from proven sustainable sources) is appropriate with modern materials such as coated aluminium or bronze acceptable for modern buildings. In some cases, modern materials are appropriate for historic buildings where pastiche is to be avoided.

**8.5** The enlargement of existing upper windows for display purposes will not normally be permitted.

**8.6** Mouldings e.g. of mullions and glazing bars are usually bold.

**8.7** Where the door is recessed, it provides depth and relief to the shopfront and invites the customer into the premises.

**8.8** Recesses should be limited to the shop entrance which should usually be centrally positioned.

**8.9** Doors were traditionally half or three-quarter glazed with a solid moulded panel below. Where they survive, they should be repaired/replicated. Doors should open inwards and not outwards onto the highway/pavement. Usually separate doors to upper floors had solid panels.

**8.10** Door furniture should be easy to manipulate for all users, located no higher than 950mm above floor level.

**8.11** Where ventilation is required, this is best provided in the form of an inward-opening overlight above the door or a traditionally patterned continuous grille set above the glazing.

**8.12** Entrance doors should have a door opening width of not less than 800mm. Automatic doors will not normally be appropriate in historic or listed buildings as they may detract from their character.

## **Pilasters and Corbels**

**8.13** Pilasters provide a strong 'framing' to the shop, both to hold attention and give visual support to the upper floors. Pilasters usually taper slightly towards the top, with a plinth at the bottom and decorative capital or corbel/finial above.

**8.14** Traditionally, pilasters were of timber construction or render. Ceramic tiles and textured coatings are not acceptable.

## **Stallrisers**

**8.15** These raise the goods on display to a convenient level, protect the base of the window from damage and are capable of being kept clean. They should be at least 500mm high. Traditional finishes include glazed tiles/bricks or painted render. Plastic and unglazed brick are not appropriate finishes. Stall risers faced with timber, stone, tiles or brickwork that matches the existing may be considered appropriate for areas outside of the National Park.

## **Fascias and Cornices**

**8.16** Traditional fascias assumed the place and proportions of the frieze and cornice of classical architecture. Fascia depth should always be less than a quarter of the shopfront height (to the bottom of the fascia) and should always be lower than the first floor cills above. An angled fascia politely directs its message downwards and is free from perspective distortion.

**8.17** The cornice mouldings should be exaggerated slightly and project well to create depth. Cornices should not be 'planted' directly onto the façade – they should project and have return mouldings unless terminated by finials. The upper moulding should be simply dressed in lead with no scallops or similar effects.

**8.18** Traditional fascias and cornices should be retained and refurbished where they exist and introduced where absent.

**8.19** Bulky, internally illuminated fascia boxes or glossy acrylic/plastic fascia boards are not acceptable. Matt-finish fascia boards particularly in timber or enamelled metal are preferable.

**8.20** Standardized or corporate fascias or logos may not be acceptable unless they are modified to fit within or compliment the traditional scale and design of the shopfront, as well as the character of the area.

**8.21** It is not acceptable to increase the depth of a fascia to conceal a suspended ceiling or structural beam.

**8.22** Within the National Park, consent will not be granted for signage mounted onto the original fascia.

## **9.0 Advertisements and Signs**

**9.1** Signs should be simple, direct and stated with clarity. There is a limit to what the eye can absorb and by repeating a message, its value is reduced. A proliferation of signs on a building brings a confusing sense of 'clutter' to a street and can look brash.

### **Fascia Lettering**

**9.2** Fascia lettering should be clean and direct. Dark fascias with light lettering and words in capitals and italics (as opposed to capitals only) are more traditional and easier to read. The proportion of lettering to fascias should usually be less than half. Lettering should not be too widely spaced or cramped together.

**9.3** Hand-painted lettering on timber fascias is the preferred form, or alternatively, vinyl lettering stuck onto the fascia. Bulky individual plastic lettering or logos are not acceptable.



## Adverts on Shop Windows

**9.4** Where retail premises have no fascia or where there is no conventional window display of goods for sale, the best solution is usually to sign-write on the display windows e.g. in gold lettering. Gold lettering is traditionally applied to upper windows to indicate other users.

**9.5** Where there is a need to display information relating to special offers etc, this is best done by mounting posters on boards set back from the windows.

## Projecting and Hanging Signs

**9.6** Well-designed hanging signs can add to the visual interest of a street, although too many can amount to visual clutter. Shops should be limited to one hanging/projecting sign and should be suspended from plain or decorative metal brackets.

**9.7** Projecting signs at fascia level should be a maximum 0.2 square metres (e.g. 500mm x 400mm). As a general rule, hanging signs should not exceed 600mm wide by 800mm high and should be positioned no higher than the mid-point of the first floor of the building. As an alternative to textual signs, a pictorial sign or symbol offers opportunities for making a positive contribution to the character and identity of a street. Internally illuminated box signs are generally unacceptable.

## Individual Lettering

**9.8** In some cases individual lettering (e.g. metal or resinous) may be fixed directly onto the façade of a building, but care is necessary to ensure that the scale and typeface of the lettering is appropriate to the building and its surroundings.

## A Boards and Menus

**9.9** A-boards are rarely acceptable and should never obstruct pedestrians.

**9.10** Menu boards should not proliferate and should be well-related to the building. Often, one or two well-designed menu boards can be more legible than a mass of them.

## 10.0 Illumination

**10.1** Illumination of signs or fascias is only permissible where it is shown to be absolutely necessary (e.g. for the international 'green cross' pharmacy logo). The use of large floodlights, spot-lamps and 'swan-neck' lamps are not acceptable.

**10.2** On modern shopfronts, internal illumination of signs where only the lettering is back-lit, or where lighting is concealed to give a 'halo' effect, may be acceptable. The use of internally illuminated box signs where the background of the whole fascia is illuminated will not be granted permission.

**10.3** The most appropriate means of external illumination is by a narrow strip-light discreetly sited under the cornice, or by sensitively located small spotlights.

## 11.0 Colour

**11.1** In addition to black and white, colours were traditionally full and plain gloss, usually in dark shades. The most appropriate colour-schemes are single-colour, but a bicolour approach can work well if the pilasters, corbels and cornice are painted in the darker colour.

**11.2** Stripped or stained timber, along with pastel shades are not generally appropriate.

## 12.0 Canopies and Blinds

**12.1** Retractable roller/folding fabric blinds with a recessed blind box are usually the best option. Blind boxes should be recessed and not project forward of the fascia. The bottom edge of any blind should be at least 2.4 metres above ground level.

**12.2** Glossy blinds are not acceptable, neither are fixed 'Dutch' blinds which look inappropriate.

**12.3** There is a general presumption against using canopies or blinds on Listed Buildings.

## 13.0 Disabled Access

**13.1** New shopfronts should accommodate the needs of disabled people and the elderly, partially sighted and/or pushchairs, buggies. Dimensions should comply with the Disabled Persons Act 1991 and the British Standards Institution Code of Practice for Access to Buildings for the Disabled.

**13.2** As a general principle, steps should be avoided and doors should be capable of being opened by people in wheelchairs. Doors should be recessed and the entrance ramp surface should be in a non-slip material and should be to a maximum fall of 1:12. On sloping sites the door should be located to provide a flat entrance.

**13.3** Where substantial alterations to a shopfront or a replacement shopfront is proposed the Local Planning Authority will require door location and design to be such as to permit disabled access and the Local Planning Authority may refuse permission where access requests are not incorporated in the submitted plans.

**13.4** With Listed Buildings the needs of disabled people can in the majority of cases, be addressed by a sensitive and imaginative scheme, taking into account the need to preserve the special character of the building.

## 14.0 Shopfront Security

**14.1** Before proceeding to install shop security measures, shop owners are advised to contact the Planning Section for advice before starting work, as the key policies to note are that:

- On Listed Buildings external roller grilles and external roller shutters are not acceptable.

- In Conservation Areas, external roller grilles may be acceptable subject to stringent design criteria.
- Elsewhere a different approach is adopted.

**14.2** Laminated glass provides security without affecting the appearance of the property. This is the first solution that should be considered. Permission for security grilles will not normally be acceptable unless special glass is shown to be inappropriate. No additional installations or fixings are required and therefore planning permission is not required merely to install laminated safety glass.

**14.3** In large areas of glazing, particularly traditional shopfronts, the introduction or restoration of glazing bars may further strengthen the glazing panels and prove less of a temptation to wilful damage than large sheets of plate glass, and be cheaper to replace.

**14.4** The quality of the glass should be stated on it as a deterrent. Wiring the glass with an alarm system can provide additional security.

### Internal Grilles

**14.5** The use of internal grilles does not require planning permission. This is generally the next most favourable solution. Permission for external grilles will not normally be acceptable unless it can be shown that internal grilles are inappropriate.

**14.6** Internal grilles can be installed immediately behind the windows and in this location they should be of the open weave, scissor or chain link construction. However, where the shop is part of the Listed Building, Listed Building Consent may be required if they affect any of the original features.

**14.7** Internal 'glass' or 'see through transparent' screens will generally be acceptable. Screens that depend on internal lighting for their see-through effect are not acceptable. Solid screens with 'pin hole' visibility are not considered to be transparent.

**14.8** In some premises it may be possible to incorporate a floor to ceiling shutter set behind the window displays within the sales area. Such locations permit the use of more heavy duty protection than open weave grilles. Another internal option is to place removable grille panels against the inside of the window each evening, but this is not often easy to do.

### Removable or Demountable Grilles

**14.9** All external grilles require planning permission. In some circumstances these grilles may be acceptable where security glass or internal grilles are inappropriate.

They should:

- Be of simple, open grille design with a gauge of 3 inches or more.
- Have concealed fixings or be painted to match the shop frame.
- Have fixings that do not damage architectural features or mouldings.
- When in place, the grilles should not cover pilasters, stallrisers or other architectural features.

**14.10** In order to be acceptable on Listed buildings and in Conservation Areas they will have to be carefully designed and where it can be shown that the security glass or internal grilles are inappropriate in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings, such grilles should be colour finished to match the shopfront or bronze anodised, and must always be stored inside the shop or otherwise out of sight when not in use.

### **External Roller Grilles**

**14.11** These are of the 'brickbond' or lattice design. External roller grilles require planning permission. This form of grille will not normally be acceptable on Listed Buildings.

**14.12** As the box housings for roller security devices are bulky and unattractive when exposed, they must be concealed behind the fascia or incorporated flush beneath it and the fascia modified. Exposed boxes are almost always unacceptable. Where used, box housings should be colour finished to match the shopfront.

**14.13** The guidance channels should either be concealed or if visible should not stand forward of pilasters and they should be painted to match the shop frame or to be removable during the day. In Conservation Areas the grilles and all associated components should be colour finished to match the colour and materials of the shopfront concerned. Existing architectural features on the shopfront such as pilasters should not be obscured or interrupted by the box housing or guide channels. When down, grilles must not cover pilasters, stallrisers or other important features. Open grilles across doorways will usually be acceptable.

**14.14** Exceptions may be made in the following cases:

- Where the shopfront is of an open type with no window, such as traditional fishmongers, butchers and greengrocers, where no alternative solution would be possible.
- In isolated situations where security poses a special problem or where there is no acknowledgement need to retain a visible display outside opening hours. The same criteria on the design of box housings, guidance channels and colour applies as for external roller grilles.
- Outside the special areas mentioned above where solid shutters are acceptable, they must be of the perforated type or the narrow lath type.

### **Roller Shutters**

**14.15** Roller shutters, either solid or of the pin hole variety, require planning permission and are unacceptable on Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas, main shopping streets and shopping centres. Generally they create an unattractive 'dead' appearance, which detracts from both the building and the shopping area in general. Solid shutters also prevent the inside of shops being visible thus reducing security, as intruders cannot be seen from the street.

## Existing Shutters

**14.16** Where original or traditional wooded shutters survive they should be retained, properly maintained and painted. Where modern roller shutters are installed without permission, enforcement action will be taken for their removal, where expedient.

## Listed Buildings

**14.17** On Listed Buildings, Listed Building Consent will be required for the installation of security measures. External roller grilles and roller shutters are unacceptable. Higher design standards will be applied when considering applications for security grilles on Listed Buildings, and will require the pattern of the grille to be sympathetic to the building. Shutters and prominent box housings will be unacceptable.

## Appendix 1. Glossary of Technical Terms

<b>Pilasters</b>	A decorative rectangular column attached to a wall, often so as to resemble a classical column.
<b>Cornice</b>	Uppermost section of mouldings along the top of a wall or just below a roof.
<b>Stallriser</b>	The vertical panel between the ground and the underside of the display window in a traditional shopfront.
<b>Mullion</b>	Vertical members used to divide windows.
<b>Transom</b>	The horizontal members used to sub-divide large expanses of glazing.
<b>Console Bracket (Corbel)</b>	“S” shaped bracket used to support a door, window hood or a cornice.
<b>Plinth</b>	A square block, usually of stone, on which a column stands.
<b>Architrave</b>	Ornamental mouldings around openings.
<b>Stucco</b>	Mortar combined with water and inert materials such as sand.
<b>Dentil Course</b>	Small square blocks found in a series on many cornices or mouldings.
<b>Fascia</b>	The board above a shop entrance, bearing the shop name and logo, etc.
<b>Conservation Area</b>	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
<b>Listed Building</b>	Refers to a building or other structure officially designated as being of special architectural, historical or cultural significance. A listed building may not be demolished, extended or altered without consent being granted by the Local Planning Authority.