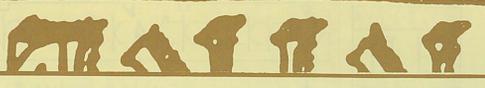


SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE

PLANNING DIVISION,  
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING  
& DEVELOPMENT,  
LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL,  
TOWN HALL, LUTON LU1 2BQ.



Shopfront Design Guidance

This document is intended as a guide for those interested in renovating or installing a shopfront to their premises with particular reference to 'traditional' design elements in a shopping street environment. It is not intended to be used as a statutory document, but, more as an informal guide on various aspects of shopfront design. It is hoped this may help to ensure that any proposals will be a positive contribution to the retail unit and the street as a whole.

Disabled Access

Proposals for new or altered shopfronts must make arrangements to secure good and easy access for all members of the community, primarily by ensuring that there is sufficient access for those with disabilities.

Planning Permission

Most alterations to shopfronts will require consent under the Planning Acts and Advertisement Regulations or both. Applicants must provide at least one plan and one elevation to represent the proposal as faithfully as is reasonably possible. They should include a drawing clearly showing the shopfront or advertisement in the context of the whole building facade and, where appropriate, details of the adjoining properties.

Grants

Assistance is sometimes available from the Borough Council, for restoration work, involving the installation of new shopfronts within conservation areas or those forming part of a listed building.

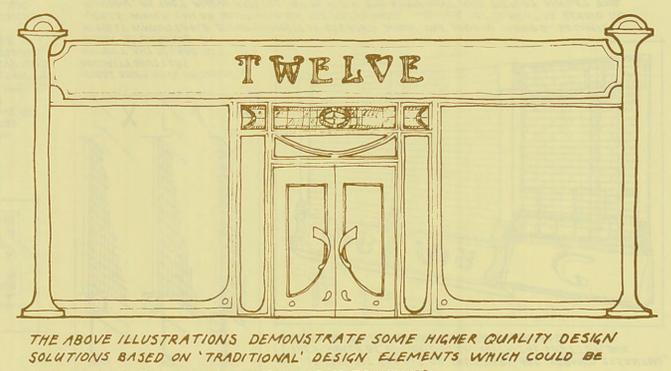
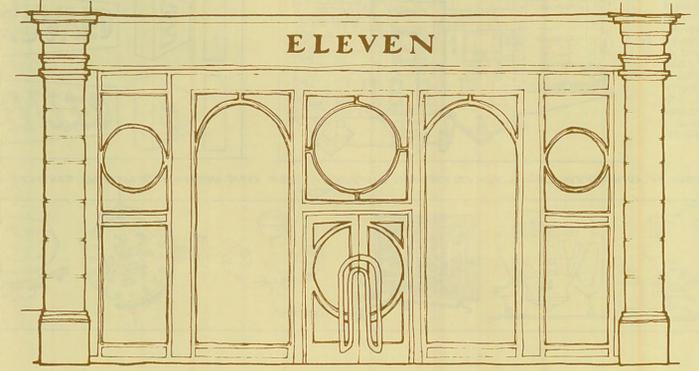
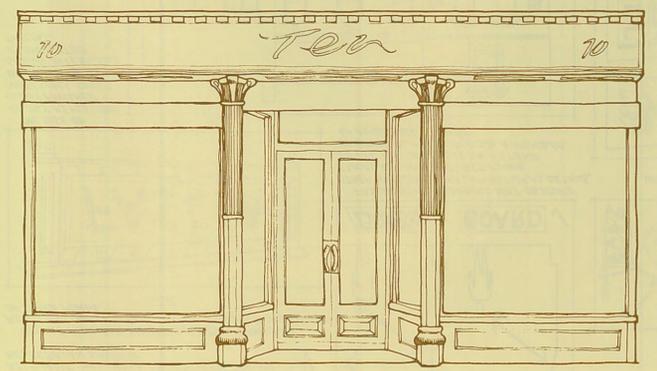
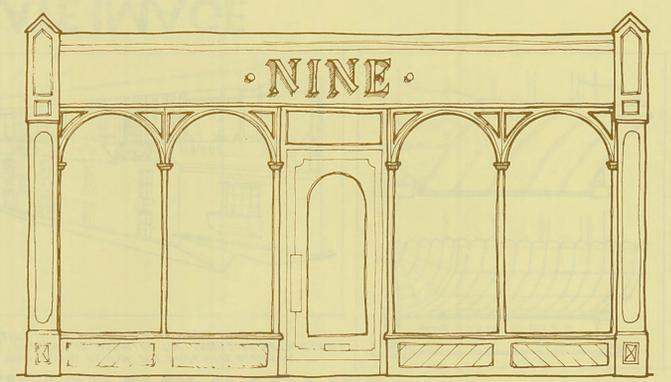
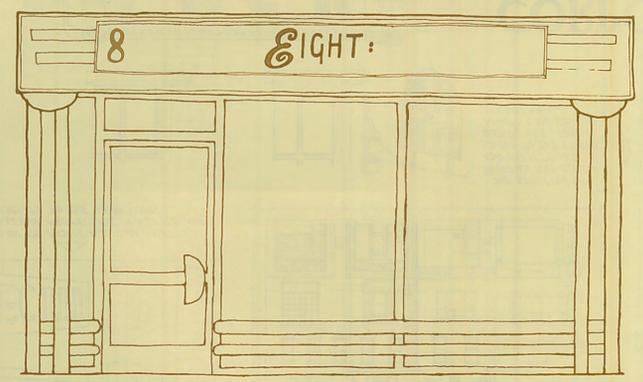
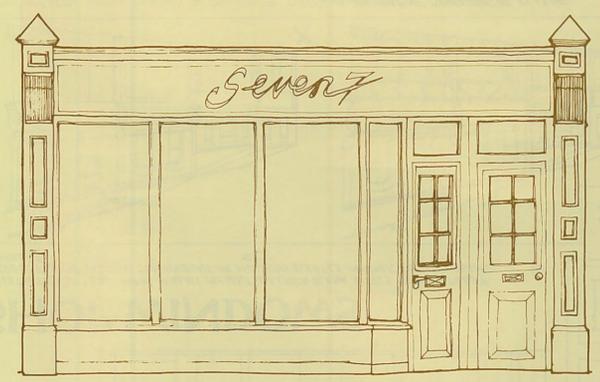
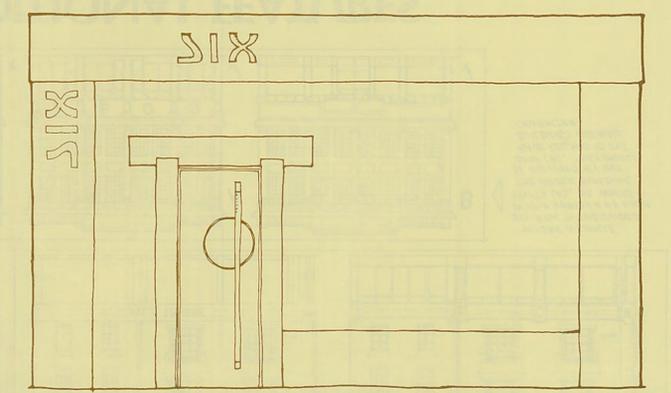
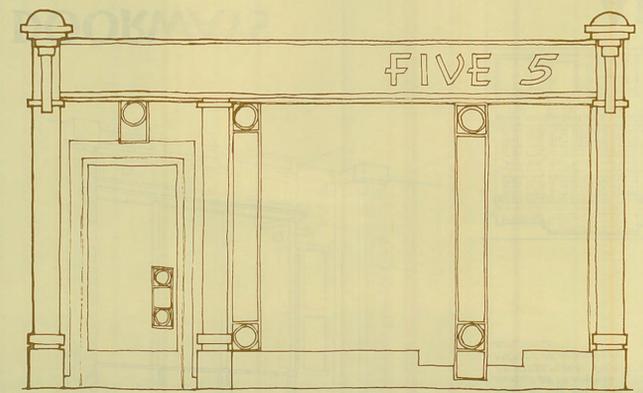
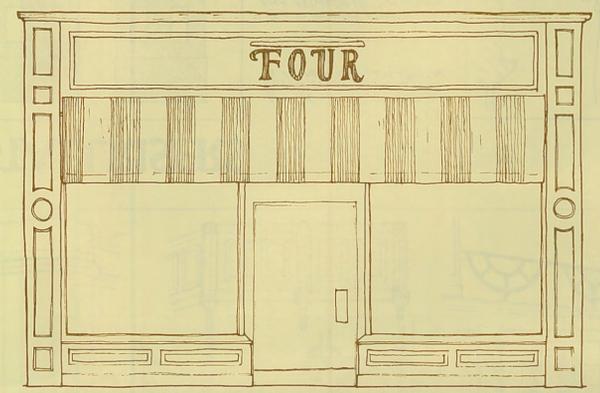
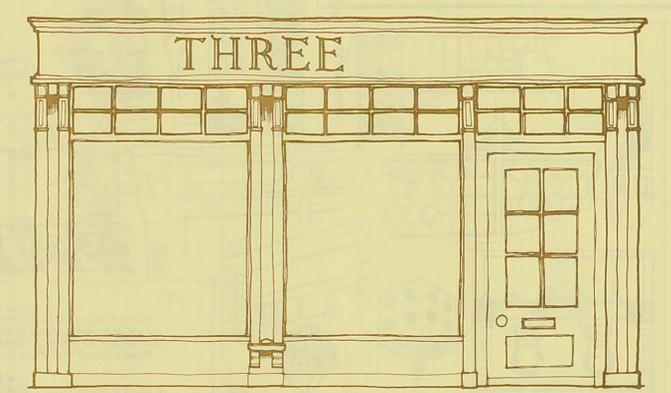
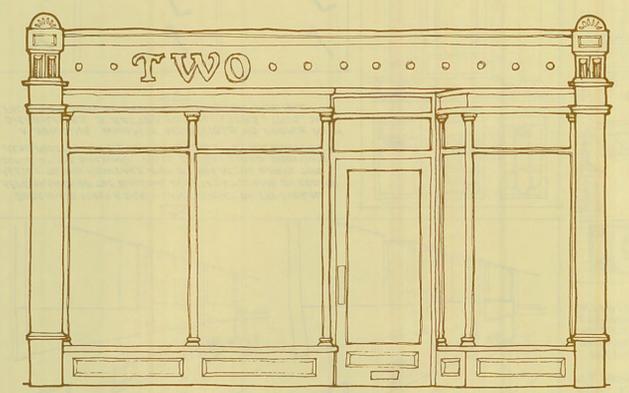
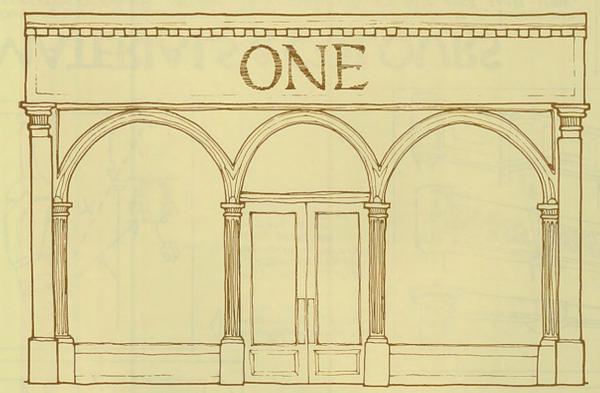
Further Advice

Applicants are advised to consult the Planning Division before making an application (see address below). This is especially applicable when there may be cases where a designer may prepare a scheme which substantially differs from the advice offered here. It would not mean that it is unacceptable, but such a solution would need to satisfy high design standards in order to satisfy its suitability.



Produced by: Planning Division, Department of Planning and Development,  
Luton Borough Council, Town Hall, Luton LU1 2BQ Telephone (01582) 546310

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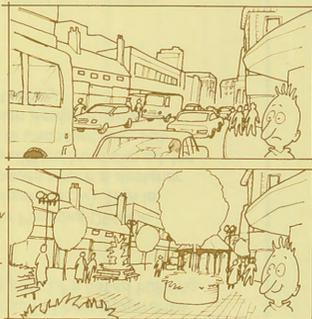


THE ABOVE ILLUSTRATIONS DEMONSTRATE SOME HIGHER QUALITY DESIGN SOLUTIONS BASED ON 'TRADITIONAL' DESIGN ELEMENTS WHICH COULD BE ACHIEVED IF THE GUIDANCE OVERLEAF IS FOLLOWED.

NOT TO SCALE.

# INTRODUCTION

MANY SUCCESSFUL AND POPULAR SHOPPING AREAS TODAY ARE THOSE WHICH OFFER AN ATTRACTIVE PLEASANT SHOPPING ENVIRONMENT IN ADDITION TO THE RANGE OF SHOP AND SERVICES. USUALLY EXPECTED FROM THEM. GIVEN A PREFERENCE, SHOPPERS WILL NOT SET FOR MEDIOCRE OR UNATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS. GENERAL IMPROVEMENTS SUCH AS PEDESTRIANIZATION, ENHANCEMENT SCENERY, INCLUDING LANDSCAPING AND PLANTING ALL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS CREATING AN ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT. HOWEVER, MUCH CAN BE ACHIEVED IN TERMS OF UPGRADING THE SHOPPING AREA BY SEEKING TO IMPROVE BUILDING FACADES WITH WELL DESIGNED SHOPFRONTS WHICH WILL GREATLY CONTRIBUTE TO A LIVELY, INTERESTING, AND ATTRACTIVE ENVIRONMENT ENJOYED BY SHOPPERS.



# SHOPFRONTS

ALTHOUGH INDIVIDUAL SHOPFRONTS MAY ONLY BE SMALL UNITS, THEY BECOME DOMINANT FEATURES WHEN COORED TOGETHER. POOR DESIGN CAN ERODE THE QUALITY OF A SINGLE SHOPFRONT OR A WHOLE STREET SCENE. THEREFORE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE DESIGN OF SHOPFRONTS TO ENSURE THAT A SUITABLE SOLUTION IS ACHIEVED. THE TERM 'FACIAD' IS USED TO DEFINE THE WHOLE ELEVATION OF THE BUILDING, WHILE THE TERM 'SHOPFRONT' REFERS TO THAT PART WHICH IS AT GROUND LEVEL. OPEN BUILDINGS HAVE INTERESTING DETAILS WHICH NEED TO BE ENHANCED AND RESPECTED. HOWEVER, IT IS ONLY THE SHOPFRONT WHICH IS THE MAIN AREA OF INTEREST TO THE SHOPPER.

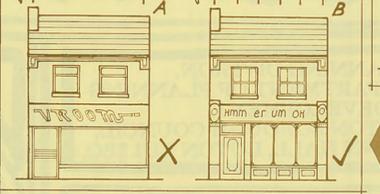
UNFORTUNATELY, IN LUTON, MUCH ORIGINAL SHOPFRONT DETAILING HAS BEEN DESTROYED, DAMAGED OR DISGUISED WITH MODERN PERSAY REPLACEMENTS. THESE ARE UNSYMPATHETIC TO BOTH THE BUILDING CHARACTER AND THE STREET SCENE. AN EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO OBTAIN OR INCORPORATE ORIGINAL FEATURES WHICH MAY BE UNCOVERED AS A RESULT OF RESTORATIONS OR THE REPAIR OF MORE RECENT SHOPFRONTS. ALTHOUGH THE BOROUGH COUNCIL WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE RE-INTRODUCTION OF TRADITIONAL SHOPFRONTS ON CERTAIN BUILDINGS IT IS NOT THEIR INTENTION OR WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE PROLIFERATION OF PERISH SHOPFRONTS ALL OVER THE TOWN, REGARDLESS OF THE CHARACTER OF THE BUILDING. A PERIOD SHOPFRONT MAY BE APPROPRIATE IN SOME CASES, HOWEVER IN GENERAL A CONTEMPORARY, INNOVATIVE AND WELL DESIGNED SCHEME WHICH USES TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS CAREFULLY RELATED TO THE BUILDING, ITS AGE, AND ITS SURROUNDINGS IS BETTER LIKELY TO BE PREFERABLE.

# GROUND RULES



WHILE THE NEW MODERN DISPLAY WILL STAND OUT, IT ALSO DAMAGES THE STREET CHARACTER. BUT EVENTUALLY EVERYONE DOES THE SAME, WITH NO ONE SHOP STANDING OUT FROM THE REST. WITH THE RESULT THAT THE STREET NOW LOOKS TACKY, UNATTRACTIVE AND DEGRADED.

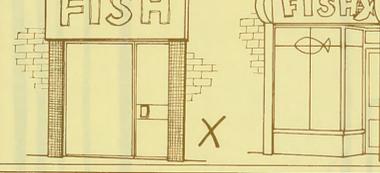
NEW MODERN DISPLAYS DRAW ATTENTION IN A GOOD WAY WHILST DESTROYING THE BUILDING APPEARANCE.



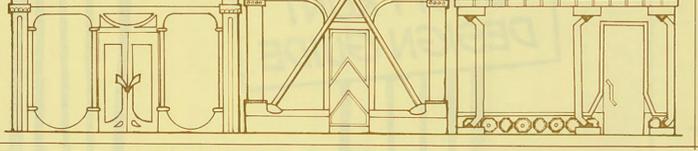
WHEN EXTENSIVE GLAZING IS USED THE UPPER STORIES DO NOT LOOK SUPPORTED BUT APPEAR TO BE FLOATING ON A FLimsY PIECE OF GLASS. SHOPFRONTS SHOULD LOOK STRUCTURALLY SOUND WHILE ALSO FRAMING THE DISPLAY WINDOW.



HORIZONTAL & VERTICAL EMPHASIS THE EYE TRAVELS MORE EASILY HORIZONTALLY THAN VERTICALLY. A DESIGN WITH STRONG VERTICAL LINES WILL HOLD THE CUSTOMERS EYES FOR A LONGER PERIOD THAN THOSE WITH A HORIZONTAL EMPHASIS. 'B' APPEARS WIDER THAN 'A' DUE TO THE LONGER PERIOD FOR THE EYES TO TRAVEL ACROSS THE VERTICAL LINES ON THE FRONTAGE.



GOOD VS BAD AN EXAMPLE OF A GOOD AND BAD APPROACH. THE FIRST SHOP HAS USED AN EXCESSIVELY LARGE FASCIA BOARD PROTECTING OVER THE PILASTERS, RAISED TOO HIGH, UNDERMINING THE USE OF SIGNS WITH EXTENSIVE UNBROKEN GLAZING. GOOD DESIGN NEED NOT NECESSARILY BE 'TRADITIONAL'.



GOOD DESIGN IS A GOOD ADVERTISEMENT

# FASCIA BOARDS

FASCIA BOARDS ANGLED DOWNWARDS, WHERE POSSIBLE, ARE MORE CONVENIENT FOR THE PEDESTRIAN SHOPPER.

WHERE POSSIBLE THEY SHOULD BE FRAMED BY PLASTERS AND CORBELS, CORNICES AND MOULDINGS OF SOME FORM.



THE USE OF HIGHLY REFLECTIVE GLASS FINISHED MATERIALS SHOULD BE AVOIDED, AS SHOULD INTERNALLY ILLUMINATED FASCIAS.

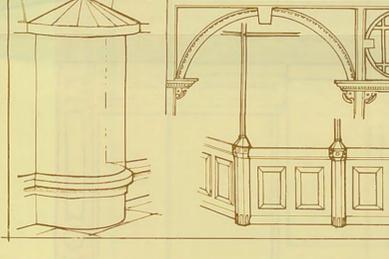


# SHOP WINDOWS

AESTHETICALLY LARGE AREAS OF GLASS PRESENT A RATHER BLANK ASPECT TO THE STREET. THE INTRODUCTION OF WINDOW SUBDIVISIONS OR MULLIONS GREATLY IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE SHOPFRONT.

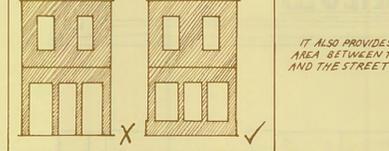


CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE USE OF SHAPED OR DECORATIVE PANELLING OR GLAZING.

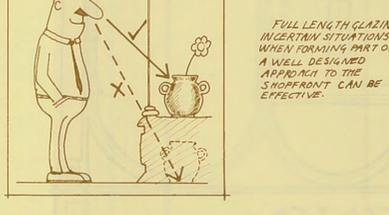


# STALLRISERS

THE STALLRISER GENERALLY PROVIDES A SOLID VISUAL BASE TO THE BUILDING AND FRONTAGE.

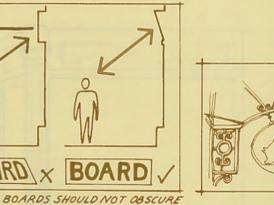


IT ALSO PROVIDES A PROTECTIVE AREA BETWEEN THE SHOP WINDOW AND THE STREET LEVEL.



# MATERIALS & COLOURS

THE MATERIALS USED IN SHOPFRONTS SHOULD BE OF A GOOD QUALITY AND DURABLE, WHILST ALSO COMPLEMENTING THE BUILDING. MATERIALS TRADITIONALLY USED ARE WOOD, BRICK, GLASS, STONE, AND BRASS. GOOD QUALITY MODERN MATERIALS ARE ALSO ACCEPTABLE, WHILST POOR QUALITY ALUMINIUM, LAMINATED AND PLASTIC PANELLING ARE NOT PREFERABLE. THE TYPE OF COLOUR SCHEME ADOPTED SHOULD BE OF A NATURE WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE BUILDING AND THE SURROUNDING AREA. VIBRANT OR GASHY COLOURS ARE NOT GENERALLY FAVOURABLE.



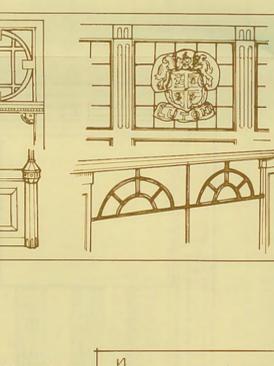
FASCIA BOARDS SHOULD NOT OBSCURE OTHER BUILDINGS, ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS, ENVOIRONS ON THE FIRST FLOOR LEVEL WINDOWILLS OR EXTEND UNINTERRUPTED ACROSS A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS.



LETTERING ON THE FASCIA SHOULD BE PAINTED, ENGRAVED, FIXED OR PROJECTING IN A STYLE AND COLOUR APPROPRIATE TO THE SHOPFRONT.

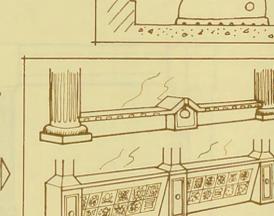


THE ADDITION OF CANOPIES AND BLINDS ADD VARIETY AND COLOUR TO THE STREET SCENE. YET, TOO MANY CAN BE OVERBEARING.



# DOORWAYS

DOORWAYS MAKE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND STREET SCENE BY ADDING RELIEF TO THE FRONTAGE AND BY BREAKING DOWN THE SCALE OF THE BUILDING. WELL LIT RECESSED DOORWAYS ALSO PROVIDE VARIETY AND INTEREST TO THE SHOPFRONT.

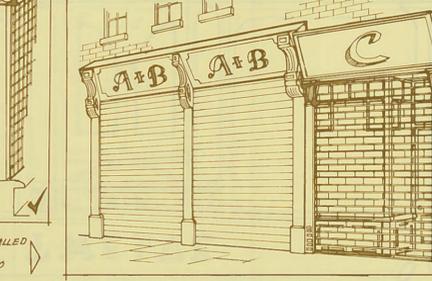


A BUILDING WHICH IS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IS BETTER FOR ALL USERS. THIS SUCH FACILITIES MUST BE PROVIDED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.



# SECURITY GRILLS & SHUTTERS

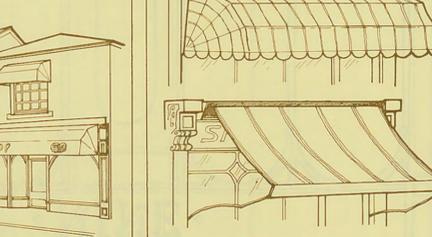
IF SECURITY GRILLS OR SHUTTERS ARE BEING ESSENTIAL, THEY SHOULD BE OF GOOD DESIGN WITH THE SHUTTER BOX BEING INSTALLED BEHIND THE FASCIA BOARD.



WHERE SHOPS HAVE INSTALLED SECURITY SHUTTERS, HOWEVER IF INSTALLED THEY SHOULD BE RETRACTABLE, WITHOUT ANY REGARD TO THEIR APPEARANCE. A WHOLLY INHOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT IS CREATED WHEN THE SHOP IS CLOSED. SECURITY GRILLS WHICH CAN BE SEEN THROUGH ARE PREFERRED, WHETHER SET IN-FRONT OR BEHIND THE WINDOW, AS THEY ALLOW PASSERS-BY TO VIEW THE SHOPFRONT AND DISPLAY WHILST THE PREMISES REMAIN SECURE. SHUTTER BOXES SHOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE SHOPFRONT DESIGN.

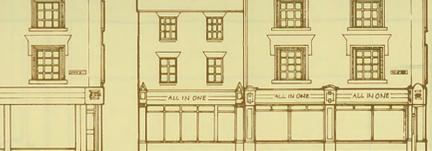
# BLINDS & CANOPIES

IN THE TOWN CENTRE FEW OF THE SHOPS HAVE BLINDS OR CANOPIES, HOWEVER IF INSTALLED THEY SHOULD BE RETRACTABLE, GOOD QUALITY AND OF A NON-REFLECTIVE FINISH.

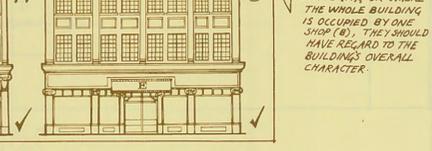


# CORPORATE IMAGE

FIRMS WITH CORPORATE IMAGES AND STANDARD HOUSE STYLES SHOULD ADOPT A MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH THAN HAS SOMETIMES BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST. THE AIM SHOULD BE TO MAINTAIN THE ARCHITECTURAL IDENTITY AND MERITS OF INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS.

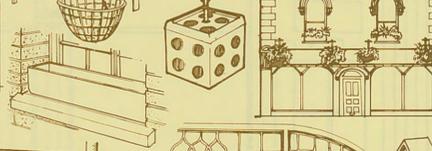


WHERE A SINGLE BUILDING IS SUBDIVIDED INTO A NUMBER OF SHOP UNITS (A), OR WHERE THE WHOLE BUILDING IS OCCUPIED BY ONE SHOP (B), THEY SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO THE BUILDING'S OVERALL CHARACTER.

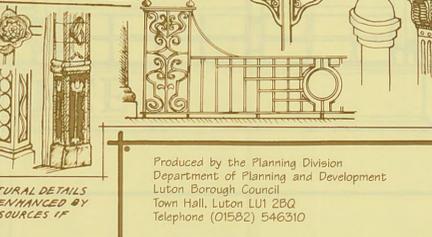


# ADDITIONAL FEATURES

HANGING BASKETS AND WINDOW BOXES IMPROVE THE APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING AND OF THE ENTIRE STREET SCENE. FLORAL DISPLAYS ARE BEING INTRODUCED AND ENCOURAGED IN THE SHOPPING AREAS.



THE USE OF DECORATIVE ARCHITECTURAL IRONWORK, GLAZING, TIMBER OR STONEWORK, MOULDED BRICK OR PLASTER, WITHIN ANY SHOPFRONT SCHEME WILL CREATE VISUAL INTEREST AND VARIETY.



PROJECTING SIGNS, LETTERING AND ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS CAN BE FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED WHEN SKILFULLY ENHANCED BY LIGHTING FROM EXTERNAL, CONCEALED OR NEON SOURCES IF APPROPRIATE.