



## E. BOWMAN & SONS

"Bowmans" is a well established local building company offering a full range of building services in South Lincolnshire and the surrounding counties, employing skilled craftsmen with a detailed knowledge of local materials and techniques. With more than 100 years experience in the area, we have long been involved in the care and maintenance of Stamford's historic buildings, and recognise the need for high standards of design and workmanship when alterations or repairs are required.

Existing shopfronts in Stamford town centre differ enormously both in appearance and quality, and whilst variety of design is to be welcomed, it is important for new shopfronts to respect the architectural and historic character of the town if this character is to be properly preserved for the future.

We are therefore delighted to be associated with the publication of this document, which provides clear and relevant advice on all aspects of shopfront design in Stamford. We believe it to be a valuable source of information and guidance for designers, property owners and developers with an interest in maintaining and improving the appearance and prosperity of the town.

**P. H. Loft.** *Chairman*

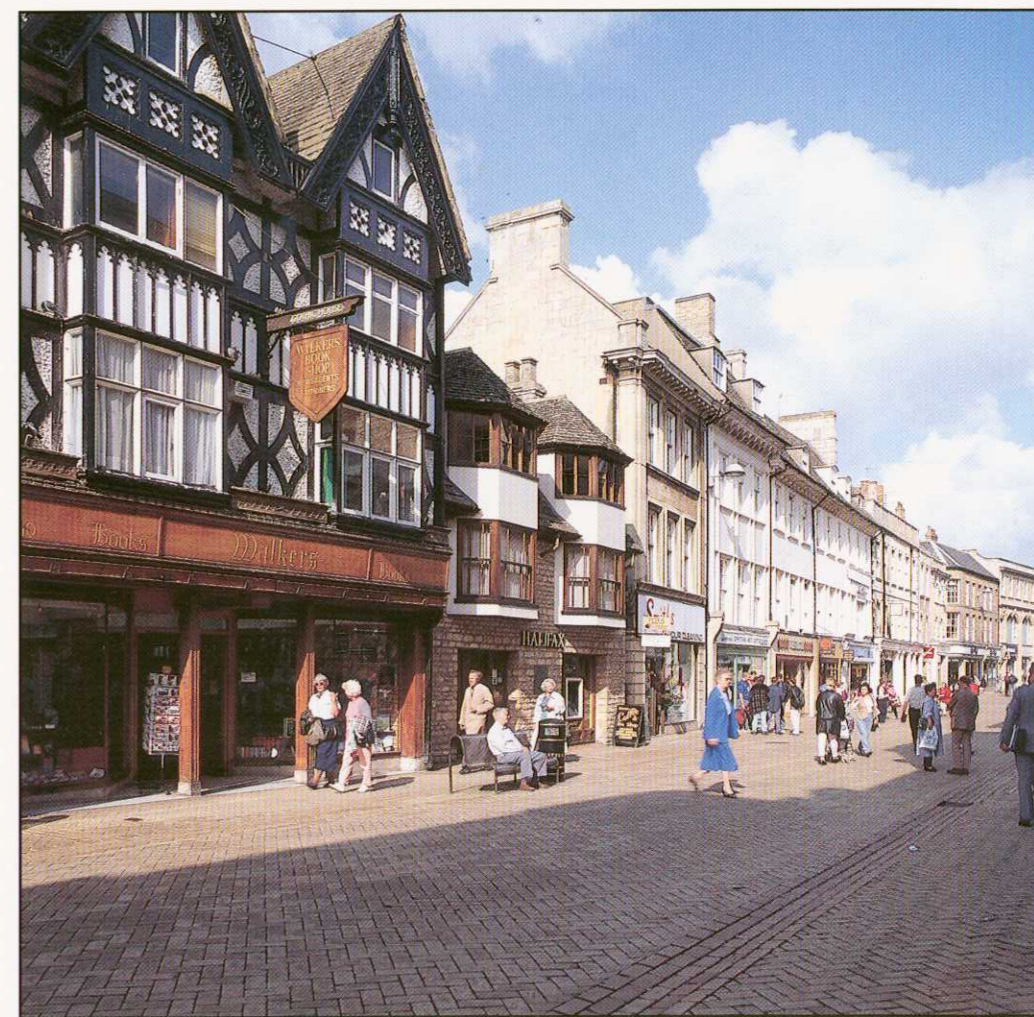
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# Stamford Shopfront Design Guide



**Foreword**

**S**tamford is rightly acknowledged as one of England's finest small historic towns. The compact town centre contains a very high proportion of listed buildings, and in 1967 became the first conservation area to be designated in England. The upper floors of its historic buildings have remained largely unaltered over the years, but frequent changes have occurred to the shopfronts, often in response to the requirements of a new occupier, or the changing image of an existing tenant.

Whilst a number of attractive examples are still to be found, there is no doubt that the appearance of many buildings, and the town centre as a whole, would benefit significantly from a careful and sensitive approach to the design of new shopfronts.

In producing this document, the Council is seeking to encourage such an approach amongst owners, developers and designers. The guidance it contains is both practical and specific, and sets out clearly the standards and requirements the Council will be looking for when considering proposals for shopfront alterations in Stamford. The guide should prove to be a valuable asset in promoting the merits of good design and high quality for shopfronts in this outstanding south Lincolnshire town.

**Ron Briggs**  
- Chairman

South Kesteven District Council

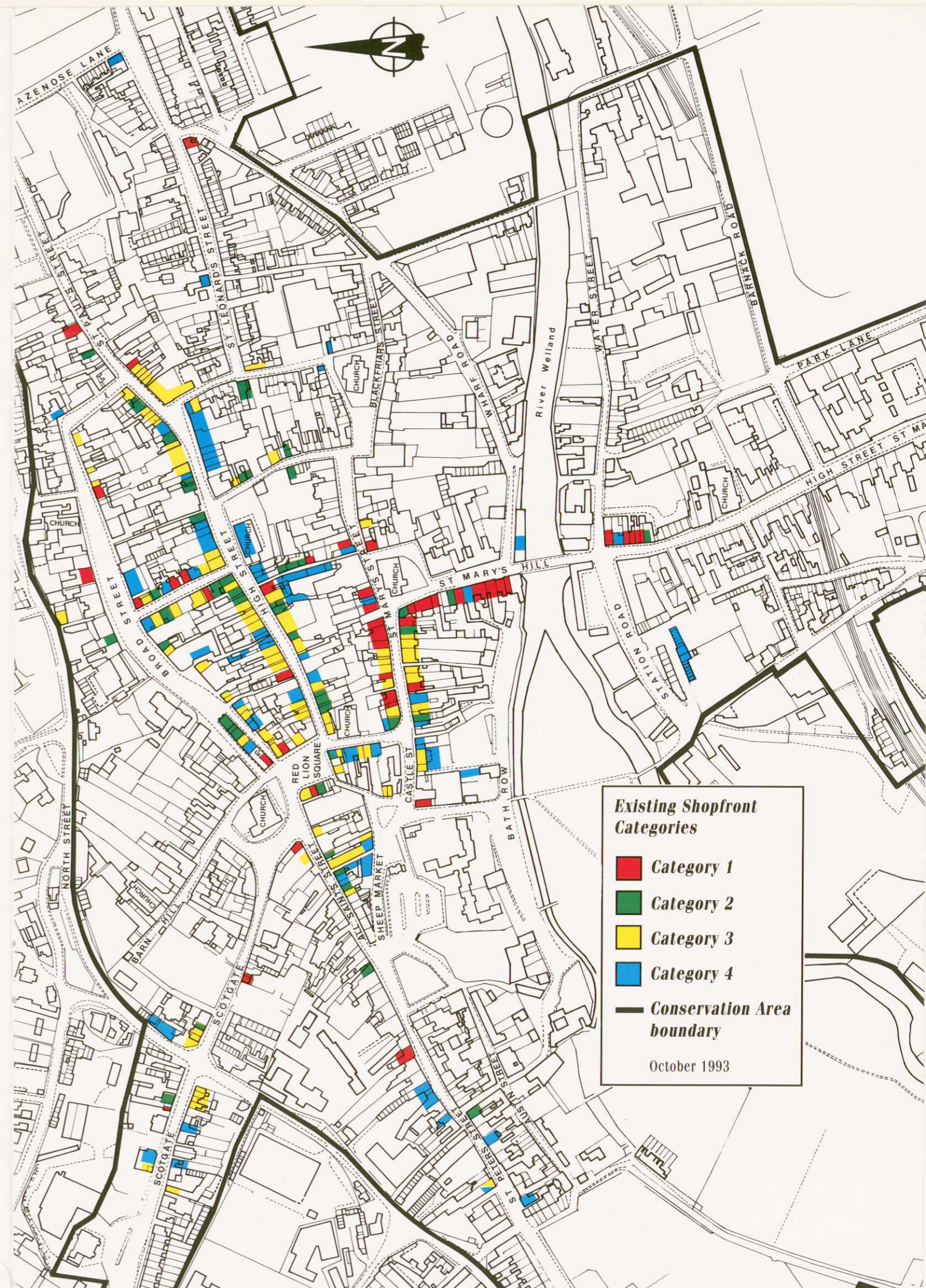
**Stamford Shopfront Design Guide**

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October 1993



APPENDIX

Schedule of Shopfronts within the Stamford conservation area

Please refer to section 3 of the guide for descriptions of the shopfront categories.

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	SHOPFRONT CATEGORY	ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	SHOPFRONT CATEGORY	ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	SHOPFRONT CATEGORY	ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	SHOPFRONT CATEGORY	ADDRESS OF PROPERTY	SHOPFRONT CATEGORY
<b>All Saints Place</b>		19	2	<b>Maiden Lane</b>		<b>Sheepmarket</b>		<b>St Mary's Street</b>	
11	3	20	3	1	3	3/4	3	2	3
12	1	21	2	2/3	2	7	1	3	1
<b>All Saints Street</b>		22/22A	3	8	3	13	4	4	1
2	2	23/24	4	10	2	14	4	5	3
3	3	25	4	17/18	2	15/17	4	6	1
4	2	26/27	2	<b>Mallory Lane</b>		18	3	7	3
5/6	4	28	2	1	4	<b>Silver Lane</b>		8	3
7	2	29	2	2	4	2	4	9	3
8	3	30	4	3	4	4	4	10	1
22	3	31	3	4	4	8	4	11/12	1
<b>Broad Street</b>		32	3	5	4	10	4	13	1
7	2	33	3	East side frontages	3	12	4	14	1
11	1	34	3	<b>North Street</b>		Former Cinema	4	15	1
22	4	35	3	16	3	<b>Stamford Walk</b>		15A	4
24	3	36	2	64	4	All properties	4	17	4
28	3	38	4	66	4	<b>Station Road</b>		18	1
30	3	39	4	<b>Red Lion Square</b>		George Hotel Mews		28B	3
31	1	40	3	1	3	(all units)	4	30	1
35/36	4	41	3	2	1	<b>St George's Square</b>		31	2
37	1	42	4	3	4	8	4	32	1
38	4	44	4	4	3	9	4	33	2
39	2	46	4	6		<b>St George's Street</b>		34	3
40	3	47	4	(North elevation)	2	1/3	3	35	3
45	3	48	4	(East elevation)	4	8	3	36	3
50	3	49	4	7	3	22	2	37	3
51	3	50	4	8	2	28	3	38	3
52	2	St Michaels Church	4	9	1	<b>St John's Street</b>		39	1
<b>Castle Street</b>		53	4	10	3	1	4	40	4
1/2	4	54	4	11	1	2	2	41	3
3	3	55	4	<b>Red Lion Street</b>		3	2	42	2
4	3	56	1	1	4	9/10	4	43	4
<b>Cheyne Lane</b>		57	3	2	3	11	3	<b>St Paul's Street</b>	
1	2	58	2	3	2	12	3	1	3
2	2	59	3	4	2	13	4	2	3
3	2	60	3	5	4	14	3	3	2
3A	2	62	2	5A	3	<b>St Leonard's Street</b>		4	3
4	1	63	3	6	3	Adj No.9	4	10	2
<b>Gooches Court</b>		64	4	7	4	28	4	13	1
1/9	4	66	4	8/9	4	39	1	42	1
2/9	4	68	3	10	3	<b>St Martin's</b>		43	3
rear of 3-4 Castle St.	4	69	2	<b>Scotgate</b>		4	1	44	3
<b>High Street</b>		70	2	9	1	5/6	4	45/46	3
3	3	71	2	17	3	7	1	<b>St Peter's Hill</b>	
3A	3	72	3	18	3	8	1	9	2
4	3	74	3	19	3	9	1	<b>St Peter's Street</b>	
5	4	<b>Ironmonger Street</b>		20	3	10	1	9A	2
6	3	1	3	23	4	11a	2	12	4
7	1	2	2	27	4	<b>St Mary's Hill</b>		20	4
8	3	3	4	28A	3	5	1	22	
9	3	4	1	50		6/7	1	(South elevation)	3
10	3	5	1	(West end)	3	8	1	(West elevation)	4
11	4	6A	3	50		9	1	29	4
12	4	7	2	(East end)	4	9A	4	31/32	4
13	4	9	1	52	1	10	1	36	1
14	3	10	3	53/56	2	11	2	<b>Wharf Road</b>	
15	3	12	3	60/62	3	13	1	Riverside Building	4
16	3	13	2	63	3	14	1		
17	3	14	3	64	3	15	1		
18	2			65	2	16	1		

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## 1. Introduction

Shopfronts and advertisements have a major impact on the character of historic towns such as Stamford.

The attractiveness of the central shopping area is largely influenced

by the quality of its shopfronts, both individually and collectively.

Sympathetically designed and carefully detailed shopfronts will

play a significant part in maintaining and improving the appearance of

individual buildings and of the town centre as a whole, making it a more

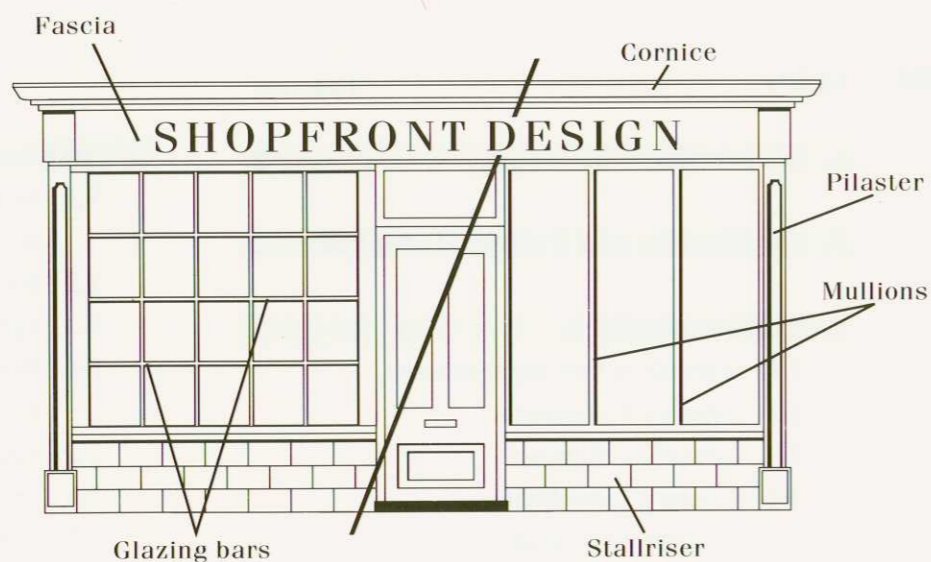
attractive place to visitors and shoppers alike. This guide

offers practical advice to retailers and developers on the approach

which should be adopted when alterations to shopfronts in

Stamford are contemplated, with a view to preserving and enhancing the

unique character of the town.



## 2. The Elements of a Traditional Shopfront

Much of Stamford's appeal lies in the diversity of design and scale amongst its buildings, and this is reflected in many of the more attractive shopfronts within the town. As with most historic towns, there are a number of elements which are present in most of the better traditional shopfronts, although their size and proportion varies greatly from building to building. Each plays a part in relating the shopfront to the remainder of the building, whilst helping the property to operate successfully as a shop.

**The cornice and fascia** mark the point at which the scale and design of the building changes from domestic to display. The cornice projects from the face of the building, giving a strong and definite line, and providing weather protection for the remainder of the shopfront. The fascia also provides a logical space for advertising.

**Pilasters** together with the cornice and fascia, provide visual support for the upper part of the building, and act as a frame for the display and entrance.

**Stallrisers** provide a solid base for the display of goods at a suitable level, and dictate the vertical proportion of the shop windows.

**Mullions and glazing bars** reduce the scale of the display windows, relating them to the smaller windows normally present on the upper floors.

*The mere inclusion of these features, however, does not in itself make a shopfront design successful. A fresh approach needs to be taken to each new shopfront, and a design created which is right for the particular building concerned.*

## 12. Submitting an Application

**12.1** When applying for listed building consent, planning permission or advertisement consent, it is essential that the plans and accompanying information show exactly what is proposed to be done and how the finished product will look. Schemes which seem to be satisfactory on a small-scale drawing can easily be spoiled by poor detailing and finishings when a builder has to rely on guesswork and assumption in the absence of clear illustrations and instructions. The importance of accuracy and care in the preparation of drawings cannot be over-emphasised.

**12.2** Applications for planning permission or listed building consent to alter or replace a shopfront should be accompanied by:

(a) Detailed elevation drawings of the whole of the existing facade of the building at a minimum scale of 1:50, showing all existing architectural detailing, plus relevant details of the buildings on either side.

(b) Detailed drawings at the same scale showing the front elevation of the building as proposed, indicating clearly the proposed alterations within the context of the whole building, including any existing features which are proposed to be altered or removed.

(c) At least one sectional drawing of the shopfront showing its profile and position relative to the upper part of the building.

(d) Plans, elevations and sections at a minimum scale of 1:25 showing as necessary the detailing of architectural features, including pilasters, cornices and window details.

(e) A precise indication of the materials and colours proposed to be used, either by the submission of samples or photographs, and by reference to British Standard numbers.

**12.3** The drawings accompanying applications for advertisement consent should include an elevation of the whole shopfront (minimum scale 1:50) with the size and design of all letters and symbols accurately shown, together with details of the colour scheme.

Where individual letters are proposed, sections or samples should be submitted showing the profile and thickness of the letters, as well as details of materials and the method of fixing.

**12.4** Where a projecting sign is proposed, detailed drawings should be submitted which show accurately the size, materials and shape proposed for the sign and supporting bracket, the size and design of all letters and symbols, and the colours to be used. A drawing of the front elevation of the building is also necessary showing where the sign is to be located.

**12.5** All this information is needed to enable a proposal to be accurately assessed, and applications accompanied by inadequate information will be considered incomplete until all the necessary details have been supplied.

## 11. Is Approval Required?

**10.3** Wherever possible, wiring from security devices should be taken inside a building rather than along the facade. If surface wiring cannot be avoided, it should match the colour of its background, be securely fixed, and mounted as inconspicuously as possible. This can often be achieved by following existing lines and features on the frontage.

**10.4** Security requirements tend to vary with the type of business being undertaken. Many options are now available and a combination of different and less intrusive measures may well offset the need for more drastic means of protection which can disfigure Stamford's attractive buildings. When choosing new premises retailers should ensure that the security requirements of their particular business can be adequately met without detracting from the character and appearance of the building. Approval will not be given for unsympathetic additions to attractive shopfronts, and enforcement action could be taken to remove unauthorised security fixings or poorly sited alarm boxes on listed buildings.

**11.1** Planning permission needs to be obtained for any alteration to a shop or similar property which materially affects its external appearance. This includes changing windows or doors, using different materials on any part of the shopfront, enlarging the fascia or adding canopies or blinds, and permission would of course be required for the installation of an entirely new shopfront.

**11.2** A separate form of consent is required for the display of advertisements, even where the sign proposed has been shown on the planning application drawings. Some signs on shops and business premises can be displayed without the need to obtain advertisement consent, depending on their size, position and content. Additional controls are in force in Stamford, however, as the town centre is both in a Conservation Area and an Area of Special Control for Advertisements. If in any doubt, it is always best to seek the advice of the planning department as to whether or not an application is needed.

**11.3** Most shops in Stamford town centre are located in listed buildings, and any alterations to such buildings which affect their character or appearance require listed building consent. This could include exterior painting (including advertisements), the affixing of lettering, sign boards or projecting signs, security grilles, blinds, alarm

boxes and internal alterations. It is required in addition to any planning permission or advertisement consent which may be necessary.

**11.4** Before undertaking any alterations to a shopfront, it is essential to ensure that all the necessary approvals have been obtained. Enforcement action may be taken against unauthorised work, and this can lead to the need for further alterations or reinstatement - an unnecessary expense which is easily avoided if the correct procedures are followed. In addition, fines of up to £20,000 or imprisonment can be imposed through the courts for unauthorised work to listed buildings, even if approval is subsequently granted for the alterations which have taken place.

## 3. Existing Shopfronts

**3.1** The appendix at the end of this guide contains a schedule of properties with existing shopfronts within the Stamford Conservation Area. Each property has been placed in one of the following 4 categories to indicate the basic approach which should be adopted when alterations to the shopfront are being considered.

### 3.2 Category 1 Properties with attractive shopfronts which make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the town.

These should be maintained substantially in their present form, and carefully repaired as and when necessary. In some cases minor improvements might be appropriate (for example the subdivision of large display windows) if carried out sensitively, but the basic design and detail of these shopfronts should remain unaltered.



3.3 Category 2 – potential for repair and restoration.



3.2 Category 1 – no alterations necessary.

### 3.3 Category 2 Properties where the shopfront has been unsympathetically altered in the past but nevertheless still possesses attractive traditional elements worthy of retention.

The attractive features should be retained and repaired where necessary, and any alterations designed to reflect their scale and character.



3.4 Category 3 – A traditional form of shopfront would be suitable.

### 3.4 Category 3 Properties where a new shopfront would be acceptable based on sound traditional principles.

Whilst most if not all of the usual traditional elements are likely to be present, each shopfront must nevertheless be individually designed and carefully detailed to complement and respect the character of its parent building.

## 4. Design Principles

### 3.5 Category 4

Properties where the traditional form of shopfront would not fit in well with the scale and design of the existing building, and should be avoided.

Here an entirely different approach will be needed to produce an attractive design which suits the individual building and contributes to the character of the town.



3.5 Category 4 – a sensitive, original design is needed.

3.6 A few properties have been adapted internally for retail use, whilst retaining their domestic scale and character on the outside. New purpose-designed shopfronts are unlikely to be permitted on such properties or on similar properties for which a change of use to a shop might be approved in the future.

4.1 It is most important to recognise from the outset that a shopfront is part of a much larger building. It therefore needs to be considered as part of the overall architectural composition of the building, and must respect the scale and character of the upper floors. Because of the large variety of building styles in Stamford town centre, each has to be approached individually. A design which is suitable for one building may be totally out of place on another, and uniformity of design should be avoided, even in circumstances where a business occupies adjacent buildings of differing design. Regular shoppers quickly become familiar with the location of shops in the town centre, and both they and visitors to the town will find a well-designed frontage more attractive and inviting than one which has sacrificed good design in the interests of uniformity. A new shopfront should take account of the rhythm and scale of upper floor windows and features, as well as any elements which are common throughout



4.1 Uniform designs disregard the individual character of the building.

the building. For example, a new fascia should never overlap the sills of first floor windows. Similarly ashlar quoins and areas of stonework extending to ground level should remain exposed, and the shopfront designed to respect their physical and visual function of supporting the upper floors. Where features have been hidden or mutilated in the past, they should be carefully exposed, restored, and respected in the new design.



4.1 Poor shopfronts do not reflect the scale and proportion of the building.

## 9. Illumination of Advertisements

9.1 The illumination of fascia advertisements or projecting signs in the historic centre of Stamford will not normally be acceptable. Illumination, whether by internal or external means, has the effect of highlighting one part of a building at the expense of the whole, and one particular building at the expense of others, thus detracting from the overall appearance of the area.

## 10. Security

10.1 The need to provide adequate security to shopfronts is widely recognised, and a large variety of protective measures are now available. The use of grilles and shutters is becoming increasingly common, and if this form of protection is considered necessary, it should be located on the inside of the shop window. If a retractable system is to be used, the shutter box should not be readily visible when the shop is open, and can normally be comfortably accommodated behind the fascia. External grilles or shutters rarely integrate satisfactorily with a well-designed shopfront, and are unlikely to be acceptable.

10.2 Burglar alarm boxes are now a common feature of shop security, and are normally required to be located in prominent yet inaccessible positions. An attractive facade can easily be marred, however, by the careless siting of an alarm box, and if such an installation is being considered, all the possibilities should be reviewed before a decision is made. For example, it may be possible with skill and imagination to incorporate a system within the design of a new shopfront. In all cases a balance must be achieved between the need for adequate security and the need to respect the character of the building, and careful forethought needs to be given to the siting, appearance and colour of any new installation proposed.



10.2 Conspicuous alarm boxes can spoil a good facade.

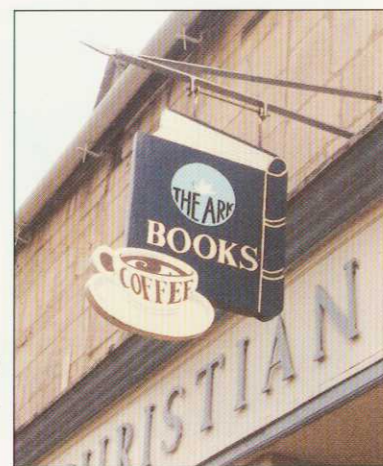


7.7 Too many temporary advertisements clutter the shopfront.

7.7 Temporary advertisements fixed to the inside of doors and windows can spoil the appearance of a building. They are mostly designed in very bright colours to draw attention to a special event, usually a sale. Such signs should be kept to a minimum (no more than one per window should be necessary) and removed as soon as possible. Similarly, an excessive number of stickers and notices on windows and doors will give the shopfront a cluttered appearance, and should be avoided.

## 8. Projecting Signs

8.1 Projecting signs have long been a recognised form of advertising in Stamford, and many buildings still retain the brackets, or evidence of them, from which signs used to hang, and in some cases, still do. A well-designed hanging sign, can be a very effective form of advertising, and an attractive addition to a building and to the street scene. Projecting signs fixed directly to the face of a building or supported in some other way will not normally be acceptable.



8.2 An imaginative sign will attract attention.

8.2 The design of projecting signs needs to be approached with both sensitivity and imagination. All too often, however, modern projecting signs are mass-produced to a standard size and format, and are bland in appearance, making little if any contribution to the appearance of a building or character of the locality. Stamford's buildings vary greatly in size and proportion, and each sign should be individually designed to complement the scale of the building to which it is to be fixed. The use of alternative shapes and profiles is to be encouraged, as much lively interest can be added to a shopping area by the display of projecting signs of various shapes, sizes and designs.

8.3 As with shopfronts, the use of rich dark colours or neutral shades will ensure that a sign is not over-dominant. Whenever possible, consideration should be given to including a pictorial feature, perhaps illustrating the trade being undertaken. Alternatively, a hanging symbol relating to the business could be very effective.

8.4 The overall design of a building should be the major influence in the positioning of a sign on its facade. The sign should not be seen as a continuation of the fascia, neither should it obscure important features of an attractive shopfront. Generally speaking, not more than one projecting sign should be displayed on a building. It should be borne in mind, however, that not every frontage may be suitable for such signs, even though they may be present on nearby facades, and the merits of each case need to be considered individually.

4.2 Whenever possible, new schemes should aim to provide a degree of physical separation between neighbouring shopfronts. This will enable them to relate more easily to the buildings of which they are an integral part, and will help to emphasise the individual identity of each shop. On some buildings this separation already exists, usually in the form of ashlar quoins, and ashlar is likely to be the best material for new separation panels where the upper floors are already of stone construction.

4.3 Where a shopfront extends for virtually the full width of the building, it must be seen to effectively support the upper floors, and this needs to be reflected in its design. Careful attention needs to be paid to the scale and proportion of the various solid elements to ensure that they are substantial enough to provide an adequate base for the remainder of the facade. Conversely, where walls already exist forming part of the original building and supporting the upper floors, more slender and refined elements are likely to be appropriate, as their main function is to provide an attractive frame for the window.

4.3 A large shopfront must appear to adequately support the upper floors.

4.4 The shopfront should normally be flush with the remainder of the facade. Past tendencies to recess shopfronts or splay back shop windows leave a building looking incomplete, and exaggerate the contrast between ground and upper floors. At the same time it is important to ensure that the pilasters are physically and visually separate from the fascia and stallrisers. Unbroken wall surfaces which merge these features on a shopfront are bland in appearance and do not reflect the scale and character of Stamford's

historic buildings. Similarly, fascias which are boxed or which project excessively invariably look awkward and tend to over-dominate the lower part of the building. A well-designed, recessed doorway, however, can provide visual interest in a frontage, facilitates good balance and proportion, and increases display space.

Exceptions will of course need to be made where, for example, the building is designed with jettied upper floors.



4.4 Unbroken wall surfaces lack interest.



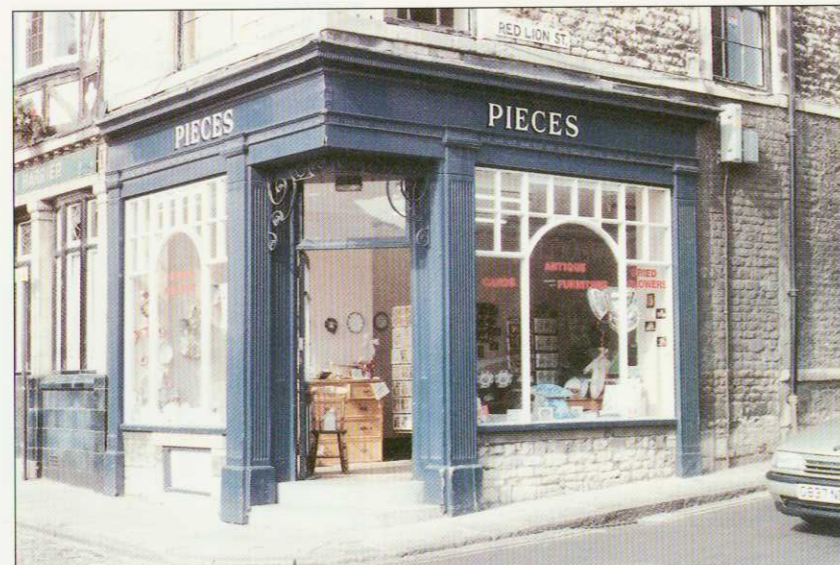
**4.5** A number of Stamford's town centre buildings were constructed as terraces, and retain a unified appearance above ground level. The ground floors of such buildings, however, are usually occupied by several different businesses, and the shopfronts neither bear any relationship to each other, nor reflect the unity of the terrace of which they form a part. A similar problem occurs where a single building has been divided on the ground floor to form two or perhaps three different shops. In either case designers should aim at achieving or maintaining a harmony with adjacent fronts in the same building facade, and a joint scheme involving all the occupiers within a particular terrace or building would undoubtedly produce the best results.



**4.5** A co-ordinated approach for terraced properties would result in significant improvements.

Such an approach would produce an immediate improvement to a significant length of street frontage, restore the unity of the terrace or building, and increase the attractiveness of the shops to potential customers. If this is not possible, a well-designed shopfront to one unit can and should set the pattern for the remaining frontages as and when they are renewed.

**4.6** In common with the majority of English historic towns, Stamford's shopfronts have traditionally been of timber construction. Despite the advent of modern materials such as GRP, aluminium or UPVC, timber continues to be the more appropriate choice when a new frontage following traditional principles is being considered. It is extremely versatile, can be finely detailed, and moulded to many different profiles, and can therefore be readily adapted to suit the needs of the large variety of buildings in the town. In addition it is durable and by simple repainting, can be freshened up or



**4.7** Glazing bars and mullions can produce pleasing effects.

changed in image without detriment to the character of the whole building. Timber stallrisers are not a traditional feature of Stamford's shops, however, and ashlar as opposed to coursed rubble stone is always to be preferred on stone-faced buildings.

**4.7** Stamford's historic buildings are mostly three or four storeys high, and have a definite vertical emphasis which needs to be reflected in the shopfront at ground level. Undivided display windows which have a horizontal emphasis should therefore be avoided, and the sensitive use of mullions or glazing bars to sub-divide large glazed areas will enable the shopfront to relate more comfortably to the rest of the building. Attractive effects can also be produced by this method, which will give a shop its own unique character. The position of the entrance door needs to be taken into account as well, as this will influence the proportion of the display windows.

**7.4** On premises where no suitable fascia is present, the best solution will often be to apply an advertisement directly to a shop window, either by painting or transparent transfer. Such a sign would need to be properly designed and positioned to suit the scale of the window, and not be so prominent that it obscures or overwhelms the view of the goods displayed inside the shop.

**7.5** Whilst in the absence of a fascia the window advertisement is generally to be preferred, the use of individual letters fixed directly to the building might be appropriate, if compatible with its overall appearance. Such letters should be solid in form, rather than fixed on spacers, and should normally be of a single colour and material, having a non-reflective finish. Special care needs to be taken with this type of advertisement in the choice of lettering size, style and colour. It should not be too wide, and using a half-round or similar section is likely to produce the best results. In deciding exactly where to fix such letters, regard will need to be paid to the design of the shopfront and the location of other features on the building, such as upper floor windows. The indiscriminate fixing of unsuitable lettering can badly affect the appearance of a building, and the wider street scene of which it forms a part.

**7.6** Modern prefabricated fascia panels, whether finished in reflective perspex or some other material, are incompatible in appearance with old buildings, and totally unsuitable for use in Stamford town centre. Similarly pre-painted timber panels superimposed on existing fascias should be avoided as they upset the balance of an attractive frontage and often appear as if they are merely a temporary expedient.

**7.6** Prefabricated fascia panels are incompatible with Stamford's character.





## 7. Advertisements

**6.2** Dutch blinds and plastic or similar window and door canopies are not generally acceptable, and should be avoided. All too often canopies of this type have little practical use, their main function being to serve as additional advertising space. Invariably they bear no relationship to the appearance of the building to which they are fixed, and can obscure and sometimes destroy part of the existing shopfront.



**6.2** Modern canopies are not suited to old buildings.

**6.3** Retailers who are likely to display goods susceptible to sunlight damage should take extra care to ensure that the premises they intend to occupy are suitable for their purposes. Formal approval will be necessary for most canopy or blind additions, and it should not be assumed that such approval will be forthcoming simply on the grounds that a canopy or blind is necessary or desirable for the type of shop proposed. It may be helpful to remember that they will not normally be necessary where the shop window faces northwards, or because of its relationship to other buildings, will receive little or no direct sunlight.

**7.1** The advertisements displayed on a building can have a profound effect on its appearance, and should be considered as an integral part of the overall design of a shopfront. The use of discreet and well-designed advertisements on business premises will not only improve individual buildings, but will also enhance the overall appearance of the town centre, adding to its appeal for both visitors and shoppers.

**7.2** On traditional frontages, lettering should be signwritten onto the fascia in a single style. It should be easily readable, and adjusted in size and content to suit the detailing of the fascia. Owners should avoid overcrowding the fascia with too much information, but should identify in simple terms what they need to say. The shape of the fascia, and the existing architectural details all need to be taken carefully into account when the form of an advertisement is being considered. Simple and traditional



**7.2** Good simple lettering is always effective whereas . . .



. . . too much information can be confusing and disruptive.

forms of lettering will always be pleasing in appearance, whereas Condensed, Italic, Bold, Extended and Old English lettering styles are often inconsistent with the balance and proportion of Stamford's buildings.



**7.3** Prefabricated lettering is usually over-prominent and out of place.

**7.3** The use of prefabricated individual letters or symbols applied direct to a fascia will not normally be a satisfactory alternative to painting, especially where plastic or metal-faced lettering is proposed. The 3-dimensional effect it produces makes the advertisement seem over-prominent, and out of place on traditional shopfronts, all the more so when modern reflective materials are used.

**4.8** A town centre building, of which the shopfront is usually the focus of attention, is a very valuable asset, but all too often its full potential is not realised. Years ago the shopkeeper and his family would often live above the shop, but this is now rarely the case in town centres. As a result, large areas of usable floorspace above shops have effectively been abandoned, or at best are seriously underused. The evidence of this is all too often plain to see in poor decoration and lack of routine maintenance, and such neglect can lead to undetected deterioration in the building, and the subsequent need for expensive repairs. The alteration or replacement of a shopfront presents owners and occupiers with an ideal opportunity to consider the future of the whole building, particularly the question of access to and use of the upper floors. The first thing to do is to look at the whole building and its curtilage to assess whether it is possible to reach the upper floors from the road via the side or rear. If not, serious consideration needs to be given to including a separate entrance on the street frontage, either incorporated in the new design or as a separate but complementary feature. Where such access already exists, it should be retained and acknowledged in the new scheme.

**4.9** A significant number of buildings presently used as shops in the town centre were in fact originally designed as houses, the shopfront being a later addition which may have been subsequently altered several times. The



**4.9** Reinstatement of a domestic scale frontage should be considered for some buildings.

original appearance of the building is often reflected in the upper floors, which will have remained substantially unaltered over the years. For businesses where a large window display is not of the utmost importance, the removal of the shop front altogether and the reinstatement of the original appearance could be a very attractive alternative, providing a dignified and unique facade for a shop or office. Great care would of course need to be taken to ensure that the design, and in particular the detailing, accurately and faithfully reflected the character and period of the building.

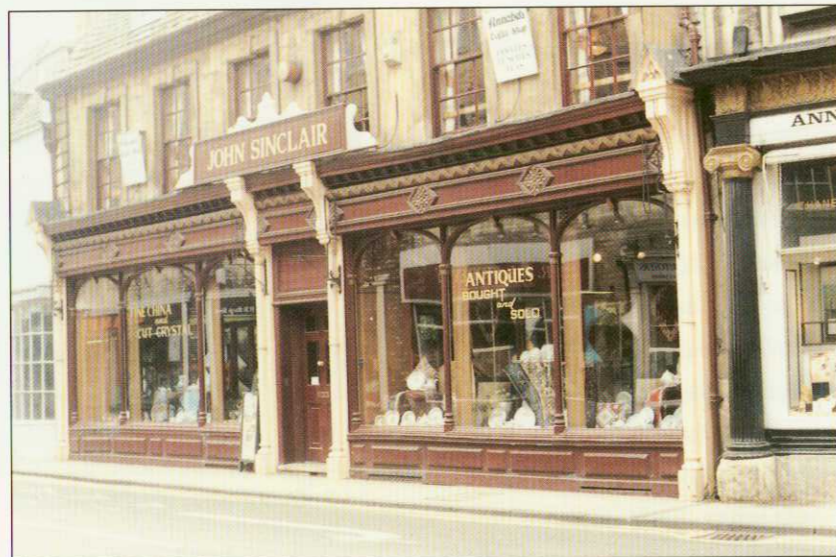
**4.10** Whilst many of the features of a traditional shopfront are likely to be present in a new design, attempts to copy historical styles from one building to another are unlikely to be successful. Each new shopfront should be approached separately, and designers are encouraged to use flair and imagination to create individual solutions based on good design principles which are consistent with the scale and appearance of the building. A variety of well-designed shopfronts will do much to enhance the character of the town centre, and make it a more appealing place in which to shop.

## 5. Exterior Painting

**5.1** The colour of a new shopfront will have an important bearing on the character of the building, and as such needs careful consideration as part of the design process. Similarly any change in colour of an existing frontage should be sensitively considered. If the property is listed, repainting in a different colour will require listed building consent. An application for a new shopfront or for repainting should always include specific details of the colour proposed, in the form of samples, photographs and British Standard numbers. Stained timber is not a traditional finish for shopfronts in Stamford and will not normally be acceptable.

**5.2** Where a shopfront extends across most or all of the building, or has comparatively wide pilasters, rich, dark colours are likely to be most suitable as they identify the robust nature of the shopfront and emphasise its function of supporting the upper floors. A single colour should be used for all the major elements. Avoid using alternative colours to highlight major features of the shopfront, such as pilasters, stallrisers or fascias and cornices, as this inevitably weakens its appearance.

*5.2 Rich dark colours produce good results on large-scale shopfronts, but highlighting major features in a different colour can weaken appearance.*



*A significant improvement.*



**5.3** Light colours are best suited to slender shopfronts.

**5.3** White or light neutral colours are more appropriate on shopfronts of more slender proportions, particularly on facades where quoins or areas of walling extend to the ground.

**5.4** A secondary colour can sometimes be used to good effect to highlight decorative or architectural features within the shopfront. The colour needs to be carefully chosen to complement the main colour, however, and used selectively to prevent the shopfront from appearing over-fussy or disjointed.



**5.4** Secondary colours carefully used can serve to highlight shopfront decoration.

**5.5** Glazed fanlights and pelmets are often important elements in the design of a shopfront, and should not be obliterated by painting out the glass panels. As well as obscuring an attractive detail, overpainting in this way alters the appearance of a shopfront by creating an additional awkward 'solid' area below the fascia.



**5.5** Avoid painting out fanlights.

Where a false ceiling finishes lower than a fanlight or pelmet, the front section should be raised or angled upwards to take account of these features. If this is not possible, the provision of dark screening in the space above the ceiling, set a short distance behind the glass, would be a suitable alternative.

## 6. Canopies and Blinds

**6.1** The need for a blind to protect goods from damage by sunlight should always be taken into account when a new shopfront is being considered. If a blind is thought to be necessary, it should be included as an integral part of the shopfront design. It should be fully retractable, and pulled down only when required. The traditional, and perhaps most logical arrangement for blinds of this type is to incorporate them as part of the cornice, although immediately below the fascia can be an acceptable alternative in appropriate cases. The blind fabric should preferably be of a plain, light, neutral colour, and be non-reflective. The use of shiny plastics and vivid or stridently contrasting colours will make the blind appear excessively prominent, and look out of place amidst the historic buildings of Stamford town centre.