

Security

Increased Security for Retail Premises Suburban locations & individual retail premises



INTRODUCTION

The need for increased security for retail premises, both in Town Centre locations, Suburban locations and for individual retail premises, has for sometime been an area of concern for both the District Council, the retailers and their insurers and the local police.

This document has been prepared in consultation with each of these bodies and seeks to set out four Council policies that will be used in the consideration of any application to Warwick District Council for means of shop security that fall within the scope of the planning system.

In this respect any form of security to the retail premises which makes a material change to the appearance of that property at any time of day or night, would require planning permission. In certain instances where a property is a Listed Building, Listed Building consent would also be required.

The information given in this document is an expansion of the information provided in the Councils HELP leaflet which is made available to retailers, and relates more specifically to steps to be taken following a criminal incident.



Example showing types of smaller areas of window glazing.

RETAIL PREMISES

Retail premises, generally by the nature of their use, were designed to display the wares of the retailer and the use of the shop windows for this purpose has become an established part of our town centres, suburban and rural areas.

It is therefore important that the security requirement of properties should not detract from this often attractive and established way of retailing goods. The appearance of these premises at the time of trading are not the only considerations, as many present attractive places for window shopping during the evening and nighttime.

Most town centres and suburban centres are not solely places of retail trading, they are also commercial, tourist and residential areas which are often fully used well after retail premises have closed. It is therefore important that their attractiveness should be maintained at all times. The closing off of shopfronts with solid roller shutters has a deadening effect upon a building and can cumulatively lead to unattractive areas where the general public would not wish to go.

It is particularly important that the mixed uses of town centres should be retained and in this respect there should be co-operation from all parties involved in order to encourage a broad section of society to feel at ease in our town centres both during the day time and at night time. This may involve co-operation with many other agencies outside the scope of this shopfront security document, however, in the longer term it will serve to make the criminal out of place in our town centres.

Co-operation is needed between retailers, the Local Authority, the retailers insurance company and the local Police Constabulary. In the latter case it is important that Crime Prevention Officer from the local constabulary is involved in all discussions concerning security to retail premises.

SHOPFRONT SECURITY



The Association of British Insurers have indicated to their members the requirement for planning permission for any installation which makes a material change to a building and therefore all insurers should be fully aware of this requirement before recommending a particular installation.

The Association also highlights the need, wherever possible, to maintain an open view inside the premises to ensure that break-ins to the rear of the premises do not go unnoticed.

It should be clearly demonstrated by retailers that adequate security measures have already been taken in respect of locking devices and alarming of premises before consideration is given to material changes to premises for security purposes. It may also be beneficial for a retailer to consider close-circuit television as part of these security measures. The use of dummy goods to form a window display where expensive goods must be displayed in a window should also be considered. The actual goods may then be protected within the shop by an interior security device behind the window display.

With these factors in mind the following policies have been prepared to assist in the design of security measures for retail premises and to help maintain the appearance and general well-being of a particular area.

POLICIES

Shopfront Security Policy No. 1.

WHERE A NEW SHOPFRONT IS PROPOSED THE COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN TERMS OF SHOPFRONT SECURITY MUST BE ADHERED TO FULLY

The Integrated Design Approach

Most modern shopfronts have been designed with little thought for security, particularly with respect to modern forms of vandalism and ram-raiding. Since the turn of the century, large sheets of glass have become more readily available and we now have a situation where it is possible to fully glaze the whole front of the shop with a single pane of glass. In the event of the most minor form of damage to these types of windows, the whole window and, in some cases the surrounds have to be replaced. The trend over the last twenty years to take shopfront glazing to floor level, thus reducing the stall riser to the barest minimum, has also facilitated the current trend for ram-raiding. With these factors in mind, wherever a new shopfront is proposed, certain fundamental design points must be included which would provide more secure premises at the outset.

These measures should include the provision of a substantial stall riser to minimum of 600mm from ground level. This should also be constructed of a reinforced nature to provide a barrier against ram-raiders. Reinforcing could take the form of either a

reinforced concrete construction or steel bars built into the stall riser. In certain approved instances the reinforcing could possibly be expressed externally as an architectural feature within the curtilage of the premises.

To reduce the need for replacing the whole shop window, following every breakage, a return to smaller panes of glass, held in substantial glazing, bars would be a great advantage. In certain situations laminated or polycarbonate glass may be used in small panes, thus reducing the cost of minor breakages by vandalism and reducing the effectiveness of smash and grab raids. This approach may be linked to a contact sensitive alarm strip fitted to windows.

The elements discussed, i.e. the stall riser, doorway and glazing size can all be formulated to create an attractive shopfront that will be an asset to the business as well as providing security at the outset. Where it is considered that additional protection is required for jewellery or electrical goods, an open grille could be provided behind the glass. This should be designed into the shopfront at the outset, in order that provision is made to accommodate the roller mechanism. Projecting boxes to house the mechanism, at fascia level, would not be acceptable.

The use of recessed doorways can appear attractive to ram-raiders and also provides loitering places. In instances, where a wide recessed doorway or part recessed window can prove to be essential, it may be possible to erect specially designed bollards at the front of the recessed area to deter ram-raiding. These, however, must be designed for the particular situation, taking account of pushchair and disabled access and would need to be within the curtilage of the premises. Simple proprietary car parking bollards would not be suitable in most High Street situations. It is not acceptable to assume the District Council will provide protection by the erection of bollards within the footway.

Where it is possible to recommend an integrated approach to the design it is also important to ensure that the shop owner has the full support of his insurer and the local Crime Prevention Officer before the design is finalised. In certain instances it may be helpful for a retailer to instruct an insurance intermediary or broker where it is not possible to reach a solution acceptable to all parties. It would not be acceptable for additional requirements of the retailer's insurers, which make a material alteration to the premises, to be agreed without the knowledge of the Local Authority.

Where the nature of the retail business is known there should be scope to tailor the shopfront within the context of the integrated approach, to the scope of the business.

Where retail premises are being designed speculatively an integrated approach would be expected from the outset to cover as broad a retail use as possible.

Shopfront Security Policy No. 2

ADDITIONAL SECURITY TO ALL NEW AND EXISTING SHOPFRONTS MUST BE PROVIDED IN THE FORM OF AN APPROVED INTERNAL GRILLE GIVING VISIBILITY INTO THE SHOP UNLESS IT CAN BE PROVED THAT THE SHOP FALLS INTO CATEGORIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF POLICY NOS. 3 OR 4.

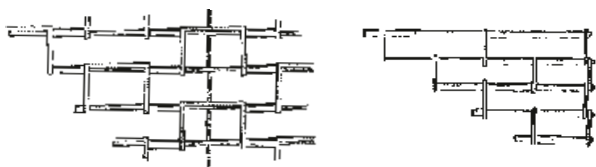
Internal Grilles

Where it is not possible to achieve an integrated approach as set out above, or where additional security is required following incidents, the overall appearance of the shopfront, together with its appearance at night, are still of paramount importance. In certain instances, where criminal acts have already been repeatedly committed, shop owners should be encouraged to take the integrated approach rather than attempting to adopt existing situations.

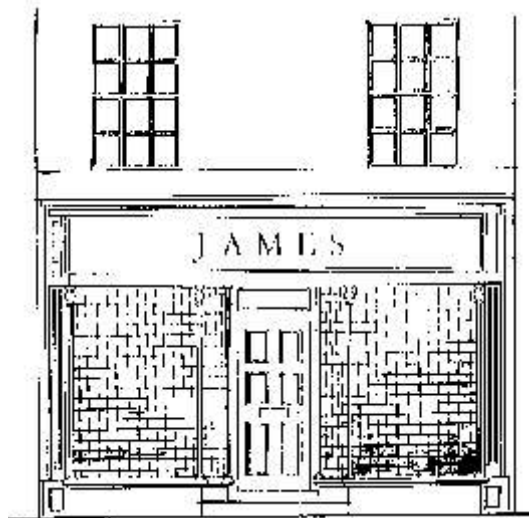
There are a number of open-work grilles which can be provided behind glass and lowered at night thus still providing a view of the merchandise after the shop has closed. This type of approach has been adopted by some national retailers and does maintain the visual appearance of the premises at night. It is important that where this type of grille is fitted, the guide channels should not be visible in the window display during the daytime. This type of approach is suitable to prevent the majority of smash and grab raids, particularly where the shop already has a stall riser which would deter ram-raiding. In areas where purely vandalism is a problem, leading to repeated window breakage's, it may be necessary to incorporate this form of security grille behind glass with a new glazing pattern to reduce the area of glass or the use of laminated glass. This would reduce the cost of repairing breakage's and would also have the psychological affect of the reduced impact of a broken plate glass window to the would-be vandal.

Such areas of high risk from vandalism would need to be confirmed by the crime prevention officer.

In certain instances, internal grilles may be provided behind the window display to protect the contents of the shop as it has been indicated by certain retailers that contents of the shop are at higher risk than the window displays. This form of protection is considered adequate by many shops who display only single items in the actual shop window area or where dummy goods are used. This form of security grille behind the shop window may take the form of an attractive wrought iron permanent screen which is closed off at night by a security screen to correspond with the door of the shop.



Examples of grilles for internal use, giving views of the merchandise.



Example of an internal grille giving views of merchandise.

Shopfront Security Policy No. 3

SUITABLY DESIGNED EXTERNAL GRILLES WILL ONLY BE CONSIDERED AFTER OTHER ALTERNATIVES HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED WITH THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE LOCAL CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER AND HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED UNSUITABLE FOR THE PARTICULAR LOCATION.

External Grilles

In certain parts of our town centres, spontaneous vandalism has given rise to the need for repeated window replacements in certain premises. As discussed under policies nos. 1 and 2 the frequency and extent of damage may be reduced by using smaller single areas of glazing. However, where it can be proved that this cannot be achieved, then the use of external open-work grilles may be necessary. These must be demountable to allow adequate vision into the window display during the daytime. In certain very specialised situations, a half-grille or railings of a permanent nature may be permissible along the bottom of the window, however, this would not be a general rule.

Demountable external grilles must be of a size capable of being easily handled and in certain circumstances it may be possible to incorporate a retractable external grille within the stall riser or fascia area of a shopfront. These should only cover the glazed area of the shopfront, it must be designed to ensure that the guide channels are incorporated into the overall design of the shopfront.

Some concern has been expressed as to the feasibility of external grilles as these may be chained to a vehicle and drawn away from the building unless bolted to some form of reinforced framework. It is thus important that any form of external grille is first discussed with Crime Prevention Officer and the shop owners insurers.

External grilles should not be confused with external roller shutters which are covered under policy No. 4.

Shopfront Security Policy No. 4

EXTERNAL ROLLER SHUTTERS WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED, EXCEPTIONS MAY ONLY BE MADE AFTER RECOMMENDATIONS POLICIES 1, 2 AND 3 HAVE BEEN FULLY INVESTIGATED AND DISCUSSED WITH THE LOCAL CRIME PREVENTION OFFICER. SOLID EXTERNAL ROLLER SHUTTERS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.

WHERE EXTERNAL SHUTTERS ARE SUBMITTED APPLICANTS MAY BE REQUIRED TO SPECIFY COLOUR AND GRAPHIC DESIGNS AS PART OF THE PLANNING APPLICATION AND MAY BE REQUIRED TO SUB DIVIDE THE SHUTTERS TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE BUILDING AS A WHOLE. OTHER SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO ILLUMINATION MAY ALSO BE REQUIRED. SHOP OWNERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER INTO A LEGAL AGREEMENT RELATING TO THEIR OWN PERSONAL USE OF THE SHUTTERS.

External Roller Shutters

The use of external roller shutters, particularly of a solid nature, have the most detrimental effect of all forms of security on most types of retail premises whether in a High Street location, suburban centre or isolated retail unit. The use of this type of external roller shutter should normally not be permitted. Only in situations where none of the measures covered in policies 1, 2 and 3 above, would they be considered appropriate following discussions with the local Crime Prevention officer together with the shop owners insurers. The only named business that is currently considered where this may be the only option would be that of a jewellers where small highly-valuable items may still be stolen through an open grille. In certain instances a roller shutter may be appropriate behind the window display of a shop thus protecting the main contents of the shop where only a small number of items are retained in the shop at night.

Various forms of roller shutter are now available with either perforations or polycarbonate strips to allow vision into the shop. These however, can still have a detrimental effect upon the appearance of a shop and should only be permitted where the previous recommendations have been fully explored and considered unsuitable. In such cases the roller shutter must be designed into the shopfront, the roller box must be housed behind the fascia of the shop and the roller guides must be incorporated into the design of the shop front. It is also important that any roller shutter covers only the window area or is designed into the shopfront. There would appear to be no justification for a completely solid roller shutter or, where it is evident that the shop owner would not wish the public to see into the shop, some form of external illumination may be placed upon the shutter at night to avoid the blackhole syndrome. In these instances, it may be appropriate to encourage tastefully designed advertisements painted onto the shutters.

This latter suggestion would need to form part of the detailed planning application.

The provision of any form of external illumination as a requirement must be integral with the shopfront. External lamps or additional illumination on the fascia would be unacceptable and contradictory to other Council policies.

Whilst there is a clear advantage of having well lit shop interiors that are clearly visible from the street, to avoid the problem of thefts from rare access points, it would be unacceptable in the first instance for the perforated or polycarbonate shutter to be proposed to fulfil the criteria.

Any decision to permit a roller shutter under Policy 4 would not be accepted as a precedent for similar installations elsewhere.

Conclusion

In considering the four shopfront security policies, it will be essential that all other relevant District Council Policies, have been met in terms of the design and appearance of the premises.

It will be necessary for an applicant to clearly demonstrate that all alternative options have been fully investigated.

The Planning Department welcomes early discussions with retailers in respect of security problems.

For further information contact :-

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