

# Shopfronts & Advertisements

## Warwick



# Warwick District Historic Heartland

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### The Need For Design Guidance

Warwick's Conservation Area status places a duty on the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. When dealing with listed buildings or their settings, the Council must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Policies in the Local Plan support these duties, which emphasise the care and concern that should be paid to the design and appearance of shopfronts and signs in Warwick. The relevant planning policies are referred to by number through this guide and the full text of the policies can be found in that document.

The Council has invested in the environment of Warwick, through the Town Scheme Grants and Environmental Improvement Schemes such as Market Place ; a commitment to the built environment mirrored by many traders and property owners. This design guidance will assist the continuing progressive improvement and enhancement of the historic town.

This guide is for the use of retailers, anyone involved in the retail design industry, indeed anyone who owns or manages commercial property in Warwick. The Council acknowledges the assistance of Warwick Town Council, The Warwick Society, The Warwick Chamber of Trade, The Mid-Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce and Warwick Partnership in the preparation of the first publication of this document which has been carefully updated.

The guide is mainly for use in the Conservation Area, which as can be seen from the plan, covers most of the town centre. Shops outside the Conservation Area are also subject to advertisement controls and to the requirements of the Planning Acts. The advice contained in this guide will also aid the production of shopfronts and signs for these buildings; many of which affect the setting of, and approach to, the Conservation Area; e.g. Coten End is partly in the Conservation Area and is an important approach to Warwick.

### For further information contact :-

**[conservation@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@warwickdc.gov.uk)**

A complete selection of guidance documents are available to download for free from the website or alternatively to collect from Riverside House Reception.

### Guidance for the Historic Environment is provided nationally in Planning Policy Statement No 5 (PPS5).

NB Shopfront Details :  
The drawings within this leaflet are not included as a standard or prescriptive design for shopfronts, but as a guide to those designing new shopfronts in the town.



# Warwick District Historic Heartland

## Warwick

### Warwick Today

Warwick is an historic town of great character. A large area of the town, centred on the historic core, is a designated Conservation Area and contains many buildings listed for their architectural or historic importance. It is an important shopping centre for the residents of Warwick and the surrounding villages and, due to Warwick Castle, it is a notable tourist destination, which attracts visitors from all over the world.

Townspeople and visitors expect to see shopfronts and signs commensurate with the historic character of Warwick and the architectural quality of its buildings.

Much of Warwick's mediaeval core was destroyed by the fire of 1694. Many of the replacement buildings stand today, and are of fine quality. The centre retains much of its mediaeval street pattern, centred on the Market Place and including the two remaining gateways to the town, Eastgate and Westgate.

Warwick is unusual in that it has three distinct shopping areas, Market Place, Market Street, and Swan Street; Smith Street and West Street, which are linked by High Street and Jury Street.

The centre is an important residential area. Townhouses of quality and distinction are found particularly in High Street and Jury Street; New residences have recently been added and many of the upper floors of shops are still occupied.

Other towns have lost their residential element entirely or are suffering the consequences of short-term or transient accommodation. This continued stable residential use is a vital component of the make up of the character of Warwick and adds much to its vitality outside business hours.

Commercial pressures may suggest the need for aggressively

modern shopfronts and signs. An aim of this guide is to reconcile those commercial pressures with the active conservation of the historic town by encouraging the production of shopfronts and signs which are in sympathy with Warwick and its buildings.

### Shopfronts in Warwick

The historic streets of Warwick have been associated with the buying and selling of goods and services for centuries now. However the concept of a "Shopping Street" only emerged in the late 17th century. Until then all goods would have been sold from the open ground floor of a tradesman's premises similar to a market stall. From the 18th century onwards, buildings were often designed with the shopfront as an integral part of the building and good shopfront design has generally been based on rules of balance, proportion and harmony dating from that period.

The purposes of a shopfront include the display of goods for sale and the attraction of customers into the shop to purchase those goods. A good quality, attractive shopfront, in sympathy with its surroundings is more likely to attract customers and be conducive to trade. This is particularly true in an historic town such as Warwick, where there is a high level of speciality shopping and smaller local shops serving day to day needs. If the overall appearance of Warwick is one of quality and interest, all commercial premises will benefit.

### Shopfront Terminology

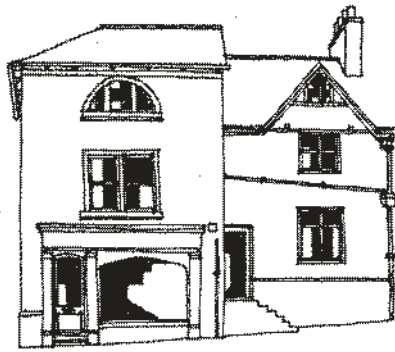
Traditional shopfronts generally have four important elements :-

*The Pilasters* identify the vertical division between shopfronts and are visual support for the fascia.

*The Fascia* provides the space for the name of the business to be displayed. In Warwick, fascia boards are usually painted, letters are then painted or applied to the fascia, or painted onto a board which is then fixed to the fascia.

*The Cornice* gives a strong line at the top of the shopfront and protection from the weather.

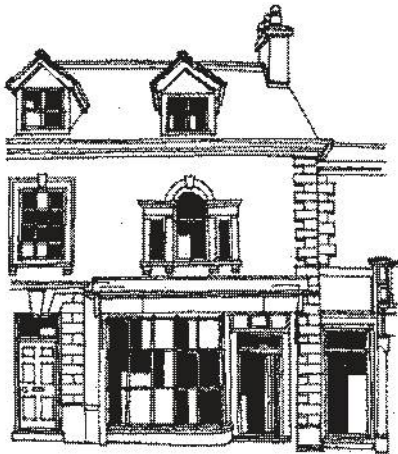




These two buildings are to be found in Smith Street. Smith Street was fortunate in that it escaped damage by the fire of Warwick. Many early buildings still survive today

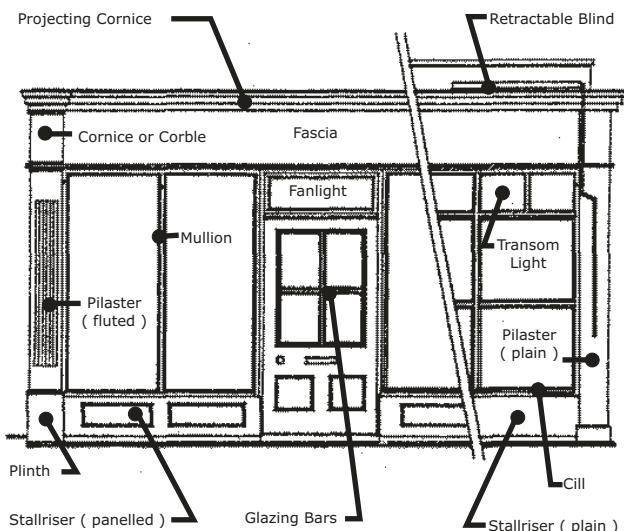
These two illustrations show how a shopfront should be in character with its setting and situation. The building above is of eighteenth century origin, with a nineteenth century interpretation of a " Tudor " shopfront; a pleasing and appropriate feature.

The building on the right is also of eighteenth century origin, but of much grander design. Originally, this building would have been a dwelling, the shop window replacing the original sash window. The design of the shopfront reflects the more elaborate character of the building.



**The Stallriser** is the solid base of the shopfront glazing and gives protection at ground level. Traditional stallrisers can be made of wood, stone, or brick.

**The Door And The Window** are seemingly obvious elements, but traditional shop windows and doors are often divided by glazing bars, mullions or transoms, the size, shape and detailing of which will depend on the age of the shopfront. The style and position of the door can have a major impact on the appearance of the shop. Some of the doorways in Warwick retain their mosaic flooring.



## Design Principles

### The Street Scene

The design of the shopfront should take into account the rhythm and characteristics of the street. A good shopfront respects its neighbouring buildings and will be in sympathy with their appearance. For example, the shopfronts at 2, 6 and 8, High Street, are all complimentary, and form an interesting group in the streetscape. The introduction of any modern element here would be discordant in itself and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the group and the streetscape.

### The Building

A shopfront should be designed taking into account the age, architectural style and overall appearance of the building for which it is intended. The design process should look at the building as a whole and have regard to the age and style of its neighbours. For instance, the fascia should not divide the upper floors of the building from the shopfront, and the same shopfront or sign should not span across two or more buildings.

Overt copying of other shopfront designs or existing shopfronts is unlikely to be successful. However, using successful designs as sources of inspiration and ideas is encouraged.

### Renovation

The renovation of existing shopfronts and signs provides the opportunity for changes for the better; changes which perhaps seem insignificant in themselves, but when taken together will have considerable cumulative effect. Where a traditional shopfront has been overlaid with modern additions, a complete restoration may be possible.

Smaller fragments of shopfronts remaining can be clues to rebuilding the shopfront. Existing shopfronts which are appropriate to their building and which contribute to the character of the area should always be kept and renovated.

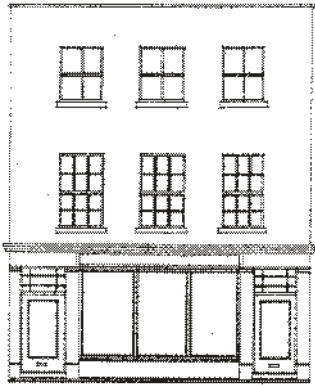
### Advertisements and Signs

Signs and advertisements should be the minimum necessary to perform their task of advertising the name and possibly the nature of the business. The Council can take discontinuance action to remove signs which are contrary to the Council's policies and guidance.

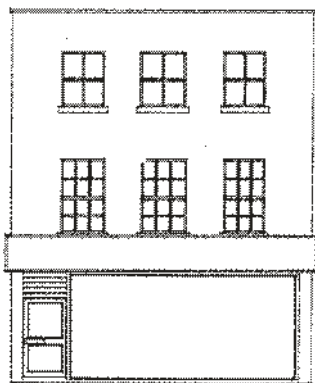
## Good and Bad Shopfronts

The shopfront below reflects its setting. It does not obscure any features of the building, and the mullions divide the glazing to reflect the overall proportions and appearance of the building. The stallriser and pilasters frame and protect the shopfront. The doors also reflect the style of the building and a separate access is retained to the upper floors. The sign board attracts the eye to the centre of the shopfront. It is large enough for display, but fits well into the fascia, which, together with the cornice, gives a strong visual top to the shopfront.

The whole treatment of the ground floor visually supports the upper stories of the building.



The shopfront below has been installed with no thought for the overall appearance of the building. It provides no visual support for the upper floors and gives a cavernous look to the shop. There are no framing pilasters or stallriser. There is no cornice to protect the fascia and to provide a visual top to the shopfront. The fascia is too wide and deep, it partially obscures the first floor window sills, helping to destroy the relationship between the shopfront and the building. The door and fanlight bear no relationship to the design of the building and there is no independent access to the upper floors. This shopfront does not only spoil the building, it would appear discordant in any of Warwick's streets, detrimentally affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



## Design Details

This section of the guide is a statement of important details of shopfront design in Warwick. Guidance produced by the English Historic Towns Forum offers good general advice. However, no guide could fully cover the wealth of variety of traditional English shopfront design. It is important, therefore, to consider each shopfront as a single element and assess its requirements individually.

### Materials

Wood (from environmentally sustainable sources ) is the most traditional, suitable and appropriate material for shopfronts. It is versatile, durable and can be easily repaired or renovated at a minimum cost. Sometimes, stone or render may form part of a traditional shopfront, for example as a stallriser, or as a surround for the window if it does not have pilasters.

Man-made materials e.g. perspex, plastic, aluminium, are too hard and aggressive in character, either for the historic buildings of Warwick or for the overall character of the town centre. Such modern materials have no historic equivalent and their use results in a bland, hard effect which has none of the character of timber, which adds interest to the appearance of a traditional shopfront and therefore, to the street scene. Whilst it may be thought that a historically superficial appearance can be achieved in modern materials, aluminium and plastic can provide none of the delicacy of detailing found in traditional work and, as they are not used elsewhere in the construction of the building, the integrity of the building is lost.

### Pilasters

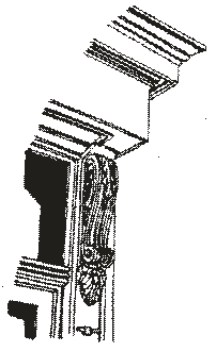
Pilasters identify the vertical division between shopfronts and are visual support for the fascia. They frame the shopfront. Not all shopfronts have pilasters, however, the shopfront at 64-66 Market Place, is a projecting window frame set into the wall. In Warwick, pilasters often rest on stone or brick plinths.

### Fascias

The fascia is supported by the pilasters which frame the window. The proportions of the fascia must be appropriate for the building and should not span across more than one building, as buildings must retain their own identity. In size, most traditional fascias are no more than 380mm ( fifteen inches ) deep and often do not cover the width of the building.

### Cornices

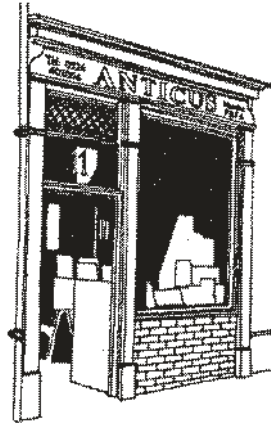
The cornice forms the top of the shopfront and serves as a weathering to the fascia. It should be located so a visually acceptable



gap exists between the first floor windows and the top of the cornice.

### Stallrisers

Architecturally, the stallriser anchors the shopfront to the ground and provides a base for the shopfront display. It provides protection for the shop window at ground level. New or replacement shopfronts will be expected to incorporate stallrisers of not less than 450mm ( eighteen inches ) in height. Often, a higher stallriser will provide better proportions and a 450mm height should generally be regarded as an absolute minimum.



### Doors

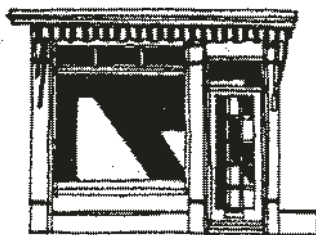
Doors can be situated centrally or to the side of the shopfront. A second door may have to be provided to ensure access to the upper floors of the building. In a narrow shopfront it may be more appropriate to have one external door , an internal lobby giving access to the shop and staircase.

### Windows and Glazing

Extensive areas or unrelieved glazing are not acceptable. Large expanses of plate glass produce a cavernous appearance which has no relationship to the fenestration or overall appearance of the building and provides no visible support for the upper floors. Mullions and transoms relieve expanses of glass and provide a solid frame for the shopfront glazing.



When restoring a shopfront, evidence may be found of the original glazing pattern (old joints, grooves etc.). Dividing the glass into small squares may not be correct. Following the removal of excise duty on glass in 1845, larger panes became common, as Bar Roussel in Market Place demonstrates. Methods of glazing can assist in security, for example glazing bars can be



security matters, see the Council's 'Shopfront Security leaflet'.

The style and method of window display is important both to attract customers and to produce a lively street scene. Windows therefore, should not be obscured by stickers.

### Security

This issue is covered in the leaflet, " Shopfront Security " issued free of charge by Warwick District Council. In new shopfronts, if required, security measures must be an integral part of the overall design. Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent will be required for security additions to existing shopfronts.

### Colours

Dark colours are often the most effective and historically accurate. They highlight the window display and draw the eye to the shopfront. In shopfront design, bright colours are associated with modernity. They give shopfronts and signs a hard crisp appearance, which may be appropriate in a new shopping centre or large mall, but not in a historic centre, where they would form too harsh a contrast with the old stone, brick and rendered buildings.

Dark colours such as green and blue may be highlighted by gold or brass lettering.

A modern building in the historic centre should also use restrained colours, as bright colours would stand out in the street scene.

### Blinds

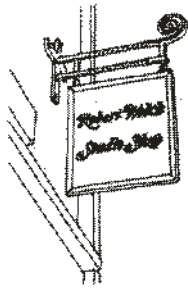
These should only be installed when required to protect goods, for example, blinds are generally not needed on non-sunny sides of streets. They should not be used as a means of increasing advertising space as this causes visual confusion and clutter. All blinds must be retractable and should be constructed of a traditional design using traditional materials.

" Dutch " or " Balloon " blinds are not acceptable. They produce unacceptable volume in the street scene and their modern appearance clashes with the historic fabric of the Conservation Area.

### Advertisements and Signs

Fascias and hanging swinging signs from traditional brackets within the depth of fascia are the only type of signs which are appropriate in a Conservation Area. They must be handpainted. Lettering can then be painted onto them, or applied as described in the " Lettering " section. Box signs, e.g. internally illuminated box plastic signs, are not acceptable in Warwick. The modern materials and designs on traditional buildings form too harsh a contrast with the refinement of the buildings and their surroundings. Premises should not be overburdened with advertising material; too many signs confuse the eye. Similarly, window stickers have a deleterious

effect on the appearance of the town centre. Advertisements should only relate to the name and possibly the nature of the business. The Council is not bound to make decisions on advertisements in the context of other advertisements which may be displayed elsewhere in the town. Because one premises already has a particular type of sign, it does not mean that the sign is now acceptable; it may have been displayed before strict advertisement controls were introduced. Each site and proposal will, therefore, be considered on its merits in the light of policies now operating to control development in Warwick.



### Lettering

Letters can be painted on to signs or individual letters can be applied to a fascia. Poor quality plastic lettering brings neither dignity nor style to a shop. Letters should not be over large; 180mm high letters for example, can be read easily from the opposite side of the street.



### Illumination

Shops and signs do not always need special illumination. Sources of illumination should not appear as features in themselves as do swan-neck spotlights for example. One form of illumination which may be acceptable is discrete downlighting onto the fascia. The source should be well integrated into the overall design of the shopfront. Coloured light sources are not acceptable.

### Access For The Disabled / Visually Impaired / Mobility Impaired

Generally this means the avoidance of steps, the use of handrails, and doors that can be easily identified and opened. Further advice for individual buildings can be obtained from the Planning Department. Architectural constraints associated with many Listed Buildings will produce different opportunities to provide unrestricted access. Proposals must comply with all statutory requirements.

### Public Houses and Restaurants

Public houses and restaurants may have different signing and illumination requirements from those of shops, and it is best to discuss each proposal with the Council before deciding on a course of action. The basic premise of using the minimum signage and lighting applies however, and such premises are still subject to the Planning Acts and Regulations. Restaurants which have shop window frontages should follow these guidelines. If special illumination for night time trading is

required, it should be discussed with the Council beforehand.

### Conclusion

Remember that the officers in the Planning Department will be pleased to assist you in evolving suitable designs in accordance with the legislation, planning policies and design guidance. Advice will also be given as to whether Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent is required for any proposed alteration or changes to a shopfront.

The Council has produced other design guidance leaflets, available free of charge from the Planning Department. If you have any queries relating to shopfronts and signs or to any other aspect of building conservation, including Listed Buildings, please refer to these leaflets or contact the Conservation Architects and the Development Control Officers in the Planning Department for further advice.

### Information To Be Submitted With Applications For New Shopfronts

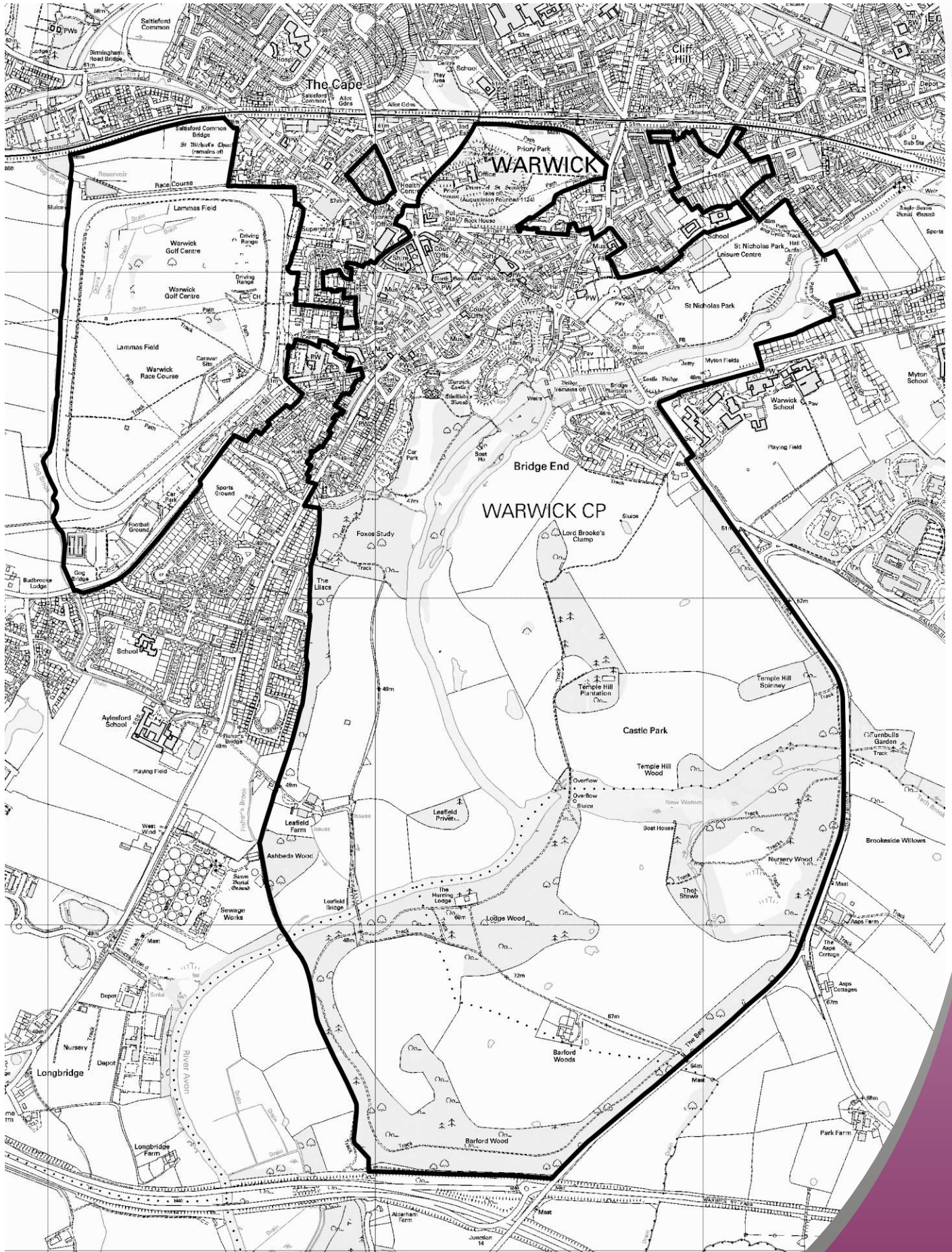
Applications for new or replacement shopfronts or advertisements in the town centre will be expected to include drawings showing the following information :-

- ( i ) Elevations showing the relationship of the shopfront to the rest of the building and at least part of any adjacent buildings and their shopfronts.
- ( ii ) Elevation of the shopfront to a scale of at least 1:50.
- ( iii ) Section through the shopfront to a scale of at least 1:50.
- ( iv ) Indication of the position of any proposed advertisement or blinds.
- ( v ) Type of materials, their colour and finish to be used in the shopfront.
- ( vi ) Any security measures.

If consent under the Advertisement Regulations is required, a separate application and drawing will need to be submitted. This should show the following :-

- ( i ) The position and size of the advertisement on the building.
- ( ii ) The type of material to be used for the advertisement together with a specification of the colour and finish.
- ( iii ) Method of attachment to building.
- ( iv ) Proposed method and intensity of illumination.
- ( v ) In certain instances samples of materials and lettering will be requested.

## Warwick Conservation Area



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Where possible, information can be made available in other formats, including large print, cassette tape, CD and other languages if required. Tel. 01926 450000.