

# Keynsham Conservation Area

## Shop Front and Façade Study

## Design and Conservation Guidance







# Keynsham Conservation Area Shop Front and Façade Study

## CONTENTS

### PART 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Keynsham Conservation Area
- 1.3 Aims and Methodology
- 1.4 Brief Commercial History of Keynsham

### PART 2: THE SURVEY

- 2.1 Background
- 2.2 Selection Criteria
- 2.4 Historic Shop Fronts

### PART 3: THE ISSUES

- 3.1 Analysis
- 3.2 Local Character
- 3.3 The Regeneration Context

### PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 General Principles and Policy Context
- 4.2 Actions
- 4.3. Guidance for Shopfronts and Advertisements

### APPENDIX 1: Draft Guidance for Shopfronts and Advertisements

### GLOSSARY

### REFERENCES

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# PART 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

## 1.1 Introduction

Bath and North East Somerset Council, Keynsham Town Council and Historic England jointly commissioned this report in February 2017.

The survey and audit work supplements the Keynsham Conservation Area and Management Plan and supports the current initiatives of the Keynsham Neighbourhood Development Plan and Keynsham Placemaking Plan<sup>1</sup> for the regeneration of Keynsham Town Centre.

Keynsham Conservation Area is currently included on the Historic England Conservation Areas at Risk Register.<sup>2</sup> The contributing factors that have resulted in this assessment and the current status

include loss of historic town plan form, demolished buildings, loss of historic architectural detailing and features (including shop fronts, doors, windows, and traditional floor materials), poor commercial signage and some negative highways issues. The Register states that the conservation area is vulnerable and deteriorating.

This survey exercise has focused on the commercial area of the Conservation Area: High Street and Temple Street. Its purpose is to develop a targeted program of repair, re-use of vacant buildings (where required) and enhancement; enabling any future resources to be focused on those properties most in need of heritage repair, regeneration and potential re-instatement of lost architectural detail.

Below High Street in 1948 High Street in 1948



<sup>1</sup> Keynsham Placemaking Plan Part 3. BANES 2016

<sup>2</sup> Historic England Heritage at Risk Register: CA Survey Uid: 3575

## 1.2 Keynsham Conservation Area Management Plan

The Conservation Area Appraisal published in April 2016 identified 13 detailed character areas. The (upper) High Street, (lower) High Street and Temple Street (areas 1, 3 and 4) have the highest concentration of historic buildings and nearly all the commercial buildings of the town. It is also the area of highest economic activity and traffic movement.

There are some good groups of historic shop fronts particularly in the upper High Street and some also remain in clusters in the lower High Street and Temple Street. However, in the lower High Street these are often sandwiched between prominent lengths of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century flat-roofed buildings with frontages of uniform and repetitive horizontal emphasis incorporating modern materials in a variety of different formats and proportions and deep corporate signage.

Important corner buildings have been redeveloped in the 1970's as prime retail sites. See example in the photographs below. These buildings sit uncomfortably adjacent to surviving groups of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings and shops.

The Conservation Area Management Plan also published in April 2016 noted that the High Street is of mixed quality with 1970's retail premises interspersed with traditional shop fronts. The traditional shopfronts provide good appearance but the ensemble should be uplifted in quality throughout the High Street and Temple Street by the "replacement of poor shop-fronts, advertisement fascia and general façade enhancements that better respect and respond to the traditional character of the building of which they form a part."

Below corner of Temple Street and Rock Road in 1960 prior to demolition and re-building and today



### 1.3 Aims and Methodology

This report is the first stage in the project outputs and this survey work is to explore the importance of the remaining shop fronts and to form a list of targeted properties which have the potential for repair and enhancement. The brief states that the survey and audit include “.... those buildings that predate 1960 that have been altered resulting in a partial or substantial loss of character.”

The survey work undertaken also includes some level of brief assessment and photographic record of all other buildings in the prescribed survey area of the High Street, Bath Road and Temple Street.

A rapidly-assessed target list of surviving historic shop fronts was prepared as a first exercise. The premises being graded according to age and whether listed or of local heritage value and the viability for change and potential for action to both enhance and preserve their appearance. All listed shop premises are included in the detailed descriptions.

The detailed and specialised audit and research for this report follows on from the broad-based characterisation done for the Conservation Area Appraisal project, and which was carried out in Winter 2015/16.

The methodology used for this survey and audit is based on:

- fieldwork, during which every surviving shop front and all known sites of former commercial premises were recorded (externally only)
- available historical photographs and illustrations (sources given in the reference section)
- printed histories, historic maps and 19th and early 20th

century trade directories

- archaeological and historical building data kept within the County Historic Environment Record managed by the Somerset County Council and Bath Record Office

This information gathering allowed the production of:

- historical information on shops and development of shops in Keynsham
- an analysis of the quality of surviving shop fronts and whether they have a distinctive character
- location plan showing historic and surviving shop fronts in each area
- shops front audit and façade assessment sheets to A3 format
- actions to improve or preserve the shopfront
- Informal guidance on shopfronts and advertisements

Office uses were omitted from the survey work where they did not comprise a shopfront. All public houses within the commercial area were surveyed.

The report has also been written with reference to relevant policy, design and best practice guidance produced by Historic England, Bath and North East Somerset Composite Core Strategy 2014 and other guidance, Bath and North East Somerset Placemaking Plan 2015, the English Historic Towns Forum, and sources from a wide range of local authority produced shop front guides from across the country. A full list of references are included at the back of this report.

## 1.4 Brief Commercial History of Keynsham

Although there is evidence and facts about the Romano-British settlement of Traiectus, this was mostly sited at the river bridging point and the present settlement is considered to have been on the higher land around the existing Bristol Road/ north High Street.<sup>3</sup>

The present Keynsham is an early medieval settlement which expanded following the foundation of the Augustinian Abbey in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The outer Abbey precincts extended up to the present day High Street with lodging guest house, Almonry, Farm and other supporting buildings.<sup>4</sup>

Although some detail is known about the abbey itself, less is known of the town. In 1189 there is recorded mention of a Fair; and trading activities had probably been in operation at this site for several centuries before an annual fair was granted by King Edward I in 1303 and a market charter made in 1307.

The Lay Subsidies of 1327 and 1334 provide evidence for the scale and range of trades in Keynsham, including inn-keepers, carpenters, weavers, tailors, clerks, bakers, tilers and shepherds. The extent to which the town was sponsored by the Abbey in the late 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Century is difficult to assess but is likely to have been significant to the local economy. Material recovered from pre-town layers in the excavations at the Nursery site<sup>5</sup> indicates something of the economy of the settlement, with extensive deposits of animal bone relating to an agricultural base.

A narrow back lane east of the bottom of High Street created a long triangular market place for traders and livestock market. Back Lane is Although the milling and later the brass industry supported the local economy, Keynsham remained a small market town up until the

clearly seen on the 1842 Tithe map<sup>6</sup>. The triangular space became infilled with permanent shops and straightened at the High Street/Bath Hill junction. Temple Street indicates a third phase of planned development; but most probably residential.

There were 2 other medieval market areas in the town:

- Around the Church where Station Road, High Street and Bristol Road meet.
- A livestock market at the junction of Wellsway, Bath Hill and Bath Road. A round pound is clearly shown on the 1840 Tithe map and First Series Ordinance Survey of 1884. By 1916 the pound is shown to the rear of the smithy; but has since disappeared.

After the Dissolution of the Abbey in 1539 the fortunes of the town appear to have suffered. John Leland implies a state of decline by late 1545 describing Keynsham as 'sumtyme a good, now a poore market town and ruinus'.

However by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Keynsham had become an important wool town. The water powered "fulling" (tucking) process, resulted in the thick west country broadcloth, exported largely in its un-dyed state, and which brought great wealth to the local clothiers. By the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century woollen production had moved to Yorkshire and after that Keynsham fortunes changed with the the brass industry taking over the older woollen mills along the Chew Valley and converting them to foundries.

At the close of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Keynsham remained a small town and it is mentioned by Collinson that Keynsham "consists principally of one street, which is nearly a mile in length from east

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<sup>3</sup> Historic England 1998. Extensive Urban Areas Survey in Avon

<sup>4</sup> Conservation Area Appraisal section 2.2 plan 2

<sup>5</sup> Avon Archaeological; Unit. 1995. Evaluation of former Nursery Site ST 65460 68789.(EBN2682)

<sup>6</sup> Conservation Area Appraisal section 2.2 plan 3

west".<sup>7</sup> In 1827 Greenwood records that Keynsham consists of 340 houses and 385 families. 138 employed in agriculture and 158 in trade. Listing in Hunt's Trade directory of 1848 states that Keynsham had a population of 2307 in various trades the largest being beer retailers (15), Inns and public houses (22) and river pilots (32).

Keynsham Railway Station opened in 1840 and this provided an impetus for growth particularly after the Fry's Somerdale Chocolate Factory opened in 1920. Many of the purpose built shops and added shop fronts at the upper High Street are from this period showing the increase in trade and wealth which followed the expansion of the housing areas to the west side of the town. The same period also led to the conversion to shops of the older houses in Temple Street which reflected the south expansion of the Town.

Although the medieval town core largely survived intact in the 19th century, it did not survive the rapid expansion that occurred in the 20th century. By far the most challenging re-development to impact Keynsham has been the creation of the shopping mall between 1964

and 1966; the construction of Ashton Way in 1974 cutting through medieval burgrave plots to the west of High Street and forming a large municipal car park and the construction of the District Council Offices in 1978-79 which replaced many small family shops in Temple Street. All of these developments resulted in the wholesale destruction of a substantial part of medieval and post medieval Keynsham, including the demolition of 91 historic buildings.

After 1970 many retail premises changed appearance in the High Street either through demolition and re-development of groups of shop fronts or through the gradual erosion and cumulative changes which meant that architectural details were lost through lack of repair or through vagaries of fashion.

Recent re-building of the Civic Centre (2014-15) has removed the poor quality 1960's shopping mall and formed a landmark development of retail, library and offices in what is intended to be the first stage in the retail regeneration of Keynsham.



Good variety of traditional shopfronts providing character in the High Street

<sup>7</sup> Collinson 1791. The History and Antiquities on Somerset

## PART 2: THE SURVEY

### 2.1 Background

The shopping centre is a linear arrangement which runs from Temple Street to St John's The Baptist Church in upper High Street. It is a key area of activity and indicator of the towns prosperity. In the primary High Street frontage (nos 36-89) there are a mix of multiple, regional and local retailers represented. In Temple Street and High Street north of the junction with Charlton Road the uses become more mixed and secondary in nature; but in the upper High Street the historic buildings are in greater concentration providing a highly significant presence.

There are around 108 retail units in the town centre. Only a few are occasionally vacant but new uses take up the empty premises quickly which indicates a buoyant demand. In December 2014 8 units were vacant. In the recent survey (February 2017) only 3 were vacant.

The key characteristics identified from both this character survey report and recent and past retail studies (DTZ Retail Strategy 2008 and GVA Retail Study 2014)<sup>8</sup> are:

- Reasonable representation of service retail -such as bakers, hairdressers, banks and building societies .
- The comparison goods offer is relatively limited, but with some large market operators such as Clinton Cards, Clarks, Peacocks, The Entertainer and six charity stores
- Small number of specialist shops.
- Average spend per trip is low at £24 (data 2014) which is below national average trading levels.
- Significant “grey perspectives” whom spend little on consumer products.
- 50% of shoppers stay just no longer than 1 hour (data 2014).
- Leisure and evening visits are very low (9% of people).

- Many poorly altered shop fronts and advertisements creating a poor environment.
- Poor access connections to open space.
- Street furniture poorly maintained.
- Pavement extensions on west side of High Street creates an uneven profile.
- High volume of traffic which causes a poor shopper environment making it difficult for pedestrians and shoppers to see retailers on the other side of the street and also creates poor air quality.

The GVA Study states: “Overall, Keynsham is a reasonably healthy centre and the Civic Centre development will provide a boost for the centre”. However, “the centre is vulnerable to impacts from the larger centres of Bristol and Bath, particularly for comparison goods shopping”.

The Keynsham Town Plan<sup>9</sup> considers this is partly affected by the limited sizes of retail units which may deter interest. The retail studies also state that focus should be on the existing floor space stock, protecting it from proposals elsewhere and also ensuring that it provides a quality which is attractive to existing and new occupiers. Although there has been progress towards improvement of the retail position with Tesco and the new Civic Centre there remains critical work preparing a public realm movement strategy and improving the town centre's environment; enhance paving and crossings; and improving access to open spaces.

There are also pockets of really good work carried out by building owners and traders whom have clearly invested in the town in recent years and some long term local businesses which are vital to High Street variety.

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<sup>8</sup> DTZ Bath & North East Somerset Retail Strategy 2008  
GVA Bath & North East Somerset Retail Study 2014

<sup>9</sup> Keynsham Town Council Town Plan 2012 and Town Plan Action Points 2014

## 2.2 Selection Criteria

All surviving shop fronts, of whatever date, were photographed and recorded. Historic shop fronts have been defined for the purpose of this study as those that survive from before the mid 20th Century; after which there is almost a universal decline in traditional design, construction, joinery, shop front display and signage.

Those shop fronts and facades targeted as historic and capable of restoration, reinstatement, enhancement or preservation are surveyed in detail and given a unique number and description. 67 buildings were surveyed. The results produced as property sheets.

Examples of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art Deco influences are also considered as 'historic' (for example parts of nos. 18 and 28 High Street)

There are no buildings dating from the late 20th Century which are of architectural interest. For example the group of purpose built shops from Thomas Cook to Boots (nos. 40 to 54) on the west side of the High Street occupy a significant 50m length of the street. They have been altered badly since their construction in 1960 and they would benefit from a comprehensive uplift scheme to the facades. However, the linear form and incongruous modern roofline suggests they are likely to remain a detracting townscape element.

In Temple Street (south of the junction with Rock Road) all the frontages from 20 to 52 were surveyed in detail, except nos. 14-18 (Iceland). A few of these are modern rebuilding: eg. nos. 42 & 43 and 44a, which have been rebuilt in a pseudo vernacular with a salvaged clay roof tile; but form an integral part of the street scene and group. They have therefore been included in the detailed survey work.

Other shops in Temple Street and High Street are late 18th or 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings have inserted shops into what were previously simple domestic frontages. These host buildings and shop fronts have been surveyed and many would benefit from investment and enhancement as detailed in the actions in the survey sheets.

In addition, there many other commercial offices, churches, which never had a recognisable shop front. However many of these businesses have signage and advertisements which have some effect on the outside appearance of the buildings and the street scene. These buildings are only indirectly relevant to a study of shop fronts, but they do represent an important type of building in their own right and their continuing presence is important to the town's character, appearance and heritage.



The variety of shopfronts and buildings provide character; although in some cases such as "Homebrew" the loss of original features have occurred.

### 2.3 Historic Shop Fronts

The highpoint of Keynsham's commercial activity and its architectural expression, came in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The trade of the town included some unusual specialist and high quality shops and historical photographs show how imposing and dominant these shop fronts could be. Many shops were purpose built or altered in the upper High Street to cater for the expansion of the town.

Nos. 16-18 High Street below. Photograph circa 1890 and constructed as two new shops with the conversion of no 14 (on the right) from a dwelling with new shop front. Conceived as single design with a horizontal emphasis which is unusual.



Within the main shopping area there is a fairly restricted style of historic shop fronts.

From the historic photographs most were timber construction with built within the ground floor or projecting from the host building with cornice, fascias to take hand painted shop signage lettering set between corbels or console brackets, large plate glass shop display windows, stallriser below in ashlar stone, render or tiled and

recessed doorways. Nos. 16-18 High Street above are unusual in having stone pilasters and stone console brackets, most in Keynsham have ornate timber bracket scrolls. In general the shopfronts and the upper floors provided a vertical emphasis and balanced appearance Occasionally buildings built as shops had a more horizontal ground presence such as nos. 6-8 and 16-18 High Street. Most historic shopfronts that survive in anything like their original construction show quality joinery work and attention to detail.

Below photographs show stone console bracket on left (no. 14) with timber bracket to right hand side and damage and decay on the neighbouring shop front (no. 12). The wood work is in poor condition and at risk of being removed, which has been a common occurrence. The photograph on the right of no 28 High Street shows a high quality glazed front with the curved glass retained and the shopfront fascia joinery but the corbel brackets lost in this case.

Where a majority of the original features survive and parts of the frame or fascia lost, the historical photographs provide good information on the original construction. These shop fronts are of great significance and importance for their streetscape impact as well as the individual special qualities of the buildings.

nos. 14 and 12 with timber console brackets



No. 28 with good curved glass shopfront



## PART 3: THE ISSUES

### 3.1 Analysis

Restoring and maintaining the shop fronts in Keynsham would preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area, which will result in visual benefit and be a significant step in regeneration.

The repair and continued trading use of these buildings makes a significant contribution to the wider objectives of environmental conservation and sustainability. To achieve this will require more than simply treating the problem as one of repairing decaying fabric or replacing lost architectural features. There needs to be an integrated approach with adequate time, finance and manpower resources applied by the local authorities, traders and shop owners.

The detailed survey work undertaken for the Keynsham Conservation Area Appraisal and the shopfront survey identified the following general issues:

- A town centre that is trading below its optimum values <sup>10</sup>
- A comprehensive range of national comparison stores and specialist outlets

- Redevelopment of the mid to late 20th century which appears tired and discordant in the prime retail core
- Groups of good quality heritage buildings and townscape but are small for modern trading and expensive to upkeep
- Good historic evidence/photographs of former appearance
- Low trading income for regular repair works and enhancement
- Many shopfronts and facades which could benefit from enhancement and re-instatement of lost heritage fabric
- High number advertisements which would benefit from improvement
- Large amount of unauthorised replacement windows and signage which will require consistent development management action to seek restoration particularly to listed buildings
- A significant loss of traditional shopfronts within the Conservation Area



Nos. 2 -4 High Street altered with new ground floor re-constructed windows which has reduced the window display area



Norton Tax Shop and No 20 High Street with over-sized signage

### 3.2 Local Character

The survey work carried out and the observations produced in the individual property sheets identified the following characteristics which impact on the existing shopfronts:

- Very few traditional shopfronts survive in anything like their original appearance. In total the survey identified only 12 out of the 53 surveyed.
- Most of the building whether they have been converted from houses to shops or were originally designed with a shop front had an element of vertical order with windows and doors relating to the upper storeys. There are a couple of exceptions to this general observation such as nos. 6-8 and 16-18 in upper High Street which were designed as large shops with a horizontal emphasis.
- The vertical emphasis has been lost with most modern shop fronts attempting to maximise the width of the shopfront by carrying it across the whole of the ground floor with very little or no vertical relationship considered in the design. See modern frontages below nos. 4-8 Temple Street where design has emulated at nos. 7 and 9 Bath Hill with wide shopfronts and deep modern fascias. This confuses the elevation and looks discordant in the street frontage.

Nos. 7-9 Bath Hill are traditional buildings with over deep signage



- Traditionally the shop fronts in Keynsham were projecting frontages which were planted onto the facade and therefore extended the building into the street. More importantly this gave greater freedom to design fenestration to relate to the area above the street and provided more window area for display and helped define the shops identity.
- By infilling a punched hole in the ground floor wall for the shop front meant that there is no need to work accurately to the constraints of the masonry openings in the first floor or above and therefore the design is often ill considered without any uplifting detailing such as an inbuilt fascia or moulding to the timber joinery.
- Modern shop fronts are flush with the elevation or in some instances recessed. This removes any street articulation and the fronts simply merge as one. The runoff shopfronts in Temple Street are typical of this effect.
- The most successful new shop fronts designs are those that consider the appearance with the rest of the elevation and respects the vertical lines, width of the building and how it is separated with the neighbouring buildings either side.

Nos. 4-8 Temple Street occupy a key site which is highly visible from the approach up Bath Hill but architecturally poor with a repetitive and linear design out of keeping with traditional hopfronts.



### 3.3 The Regeneration Context

A shopfront strategy should take its place in a series of regeneration measures to achieve a significant level of positive improvements in Keynsham. These already include:

- Phase 1 of a Town Centre Improvement scheme which has been completed including the creation of a formal Civic Square and Market Walk.
- Experimental one way trial on Keynsham High Street to reduce traffic impact and improve air quality
- If the one way trial is successful, developing a permanent scheme for the High Street including public realm and streetscape improvements

The Keynsham Neighbourhood Development Plan Group are developing the town's "unique selling point" and recognise the substantial contribution made by the town's shops and economy by specialist retailers and which will place shops and shopfronts at the heart of the regeneration vision.

The Bath and North East Somerset Council Placemaking Plan promotes Keynsham as a service centre and the town is targeted as an area of housing and employment growth.<sup>11</sup>

The Placemaking Plan states that overall, the town centre is assessed as being a relatively healthy centre, but is vulnerable to impacts from its larger neighbours and should therefore continue to focus on qualitative improvements. The High Street is therefore the priority area to address within Keynsham in terms of public realm improvements and improving the retail offer, much of which depends on implementing the recommendations from the Transport Strategy and the Conservation Area Management Plan. The High Street needs to remain accessible for businesses but must be more pedestrian friendly.

The Placemaking Plan proposes regeneration objectives and the shopfront and facade improvement scheme should sit alongside those principal opportunities to achieve both commercial and environmental improvements.

In developing an action plan or grant scheme for shopfront improvements consideration should be given to also delivering some of the wider regeneration objectives of the Placemaking Plan. Such as:

- Preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area which should extend beyond the experimental street-works zone to include upper High Street and Temple Street and links to Ashton Way and the Memorial Park
- Increase economic activity and reduce number of vacant premises
- Encourage greater investment in repair and maintenance of buildings
- Improve the general environment so Keynsham is perceived as an historic location of high quality and local distinctiveness
- Encourage use of traditional and local materials, and foster traditional and locally based craft skills (e.g. in quality joinery, masonry, sign writing and glazier's work)
- Increase the trading diversification of the town centre
- Raise volume of visits and spending by local resident and visitors

<sup>11</sup> Keynsham Placemaking Plan Part 3. BANES 2016

## **PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 General Principles and Policy Context**

The Council has the responsibility to ensure that the settings of listed buildings and their features of special architectural or historic interest are preserved and enhanced. It is also required to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character of the Keynsham Conservation Area when dealing with all development in the commercial area. It is recommended that the local councils ensure that they:

- Apply all relevant development management policies and formal and informal guidance, including those in the Keynsham Conservation Area Management Plan and this guidance and accompanying detailed survey sheets
- Retain old shopfronts of merit as a fundamental principle
- The local councils and historic england to consider introducing a pilot scheme involving one or more group of buildings
- Repair and maintain the existing stock of historic shopfronts in Keynsham by means of “demonstration project”
- Establish and promote grant schemes and investment initiatives to repair and enhance heritage shopfronts
- Integrate shopfront scheme into a wider framework of regeneration measures
- Review the effectiveness of development management practises and statutory controls to ensure full account is taken of designations and heritage assets
- The local authority to effectively exercise statutory controls as well as enabling role

## 4.2 Actions

The survey work has identified a considerable degree of unauthorised works to front facades which have removed historic sashes to upper floors and the removal of some heritage fabric to listed buildings through both repair works and shopfront alterations. In addition there appears to be some unauthorised illuminated signage and applied fascia panels which have materially affected the external appearance of the building.

The success of any strategy depends on the local community agreeing and adopting proposals. Whilst the local authorities must play a continuing role in enabling change.

General actions:

- Exercise planning controls and enforcement action for all listed buildings where there are identified unauthorised work
- Effective use of statutory powers as well as enabling role to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the listed buildings, and all buildings included in the “local list” of those buildings which are local heritage assets
- The Local Authorities to promote grant schemes and investment initiatives to repair, re-instate historic shopfronts and enhance the front facades. This is likely to require a prioritisation from the survey data collected. Out of those identified in the survey work some 30 or so highest-priority shopfronts should be targeted
- A pilot demonstration project proposal should be developed as an exemplar to ensure momentum is not lost during the 2 year timetable to get a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant application approved. This should identify say 2 or 3 key groups of 6 properties in High Street or Temple Street. These groups should be established in collaboration with the grant partners, traders and owners
- To facilitate the work scale drawings should be prepared with appropriately detailed design proposals for each building to include shopfront advertisement signage, window and door

joinery, rainwater goods, appropriate paint colour finishes; and requirements for other facade repair. Where required to prepare and submit necessary consents and approval

- The local authorities to work with local community groups, shop traders and owners and their agents to produce detailed shopfront and advertisement informal guidance including explanation of requirements for planning consents

### **4.3 Guidance for Shopfronts and Advertisements**

Design Guidance objective is to encourage the replacement of inappropriate modern shopfronts with traditionally detailed shopfronts based on historical evidence or with appropriately and well-detailed modern shopfronts. It also will have the purpose of retaining and repairing the existing tradition historic shopfronts.

The designs and appearance of shopfronts and of their projecting blinds can have particular impact and should be related to the character of the building and to their location. The use of standardised company-type shopfronts with large areas of plate glass, plastic, metallic or tile finishes are unlikely to harmonise with the intention of Conservation designation.

In view of the past cumulative impact of past alterations and the fact that there are only a handful of good shopfronts there is an advantage in preparing design guidance to influence and manage enhancements when future changes are proposed by shop owners, traders and their agents.

It is recommended that detailed separate and illustrated guidance be prepared with the local community, Chamber of Commerce and Keynsham Town Council.

The guidance is to take account of the broad recommendations which are based on the survey and understanding of the existing character of the shops and commercial premises in the town centre.

Informal guidance notes are included at APPENDIX 1.

## Appendix 1

## Draft Guidance for Shopfronts and Advertisements

### Traditional Shopfronts

Traditional shopfront design relied on a set of principles based on proportion, balance and the right relationship of the parts to the whole. These principles are still valid today. Each building and site is unique and a good design should appraise the historic photographs of the original shopfront and its signage and where possible re-instate the traditional design. Many of the shopfronts in Keynsham were planted on the facade and projected forward onto the pavement area.

- Where the existing historic shopfront or shop sign contributes to the character of the building and the surrounding conservation area it must be retained. Listed building consent or permission will normally only be granted for the repair or restoration
- Other shopfronts which, although altered or repaired with modern joinery, may still retain much of their original appearance and will contribute to the historic and/or architectural character of the area. They also need to be retained but inappropriate modern interventions replaced with traditional joinery or stonework for pilasters and stall risers for example
- Historic adverts, features or signs which have a long association with the building, should be retained where possible. For example, where a sign has been painted on to a wall - this “ghost sign” needs to be retained, or where glazed wall tiles have been used in the original or early design of the shopfront. These are to be retained and a scheme developed around these features
- Where an existing shopfront or shop sign that is unsympathetic to the character of the building is proposed for renewal, the proposed alteration will need to demonstrate an improvement to the appearance by integrating it into the building in terms of its design, appearance and scale. The design the appearance based on historic evidence in photographs or drawings
- Where the traditional framework of the shop remains, e.g. pilasters, columns and incorporating a fascia for example, these features should be retained and repaired. The new shopfront incorporated within it. Redundant fixtures and fittings may be removed with prior consent or permission for the works
- Shopfront design should take into account the age and architectural style of a building, and should deal with the building as a whole. For example a shopfront must not attempt to visually separate the ground floor from the rest of the building, or to over-emphasise a fascia. However, the use of painting schemes may emphasise the shopfront in a different but complementary colour or shade
- There are some shopfronts combining two building units. These often disrupt the strong vertical lines and introduce a horizontal emphasis. It may be necessary therefore to retain or introduce an intervening pilasters positioning of the entrance door and to break the fascia so that it looks like two separate shop units
- Replacement shopfronts or shop signs for historic buildings are to generally reflect the historic details of the building with a traditional style of shopfront and by utilising traditional timber materials. They must be designed to respect the period and style of the building and the form and proportions of the superior shopfronts or shop signs in the local area

### Modern Shopfronts

For modern buildings it will be appropriate to make a modern shopfront either within the opening or within a carefully articulated new shop-frame that reinterprets the proportions and form of the adjacent shopfronts in a contemporary manner. The design of modern replacement shopfronts should also be of a high standard design in order to bring diversity and vitality to the street.

- Refurbished and new shopfronts should be contained within the space originally designed for the shop unit
- Refurbished and new shop signs should be in proportion with the building and should not unduly dominate any elevation. Generally: signs should be contained within any space originally designed for them and should not obscure the surrounding façade or traditional elements

### Security Shutters

- External grilles, roller shutters or solid metal shutters will not be permitted on listed buildings or in Keynsham Conservation Areas. Internal open lattice type shutters will be acceptable where they are set back from the plate glass display window and where the design does not cause any adverse effect on the listed building or conservation area.
- Security Glass is an ideal solution with no detrimental effect on the appearance of the shop. It is toughened and laminated and will give very high levels of security

### Fascias and Signs

- Fascias are perhaps the most dominant feature of the shopfront. They play a dual role in both communicating the name, trade and number of the shop and forming an important design element in the 'framework' of the shopfront. Choice of signage is also important. Traditional fascias should have hand-painted sign writing or applied transfer lettering. Individual fixed lettering or sign writing is appropriate in circumstances where there is no fascia such as offices and public houses

### Projecting and Hanging Signs

- Projecting or hanging signs should be painted timber or stove enamelled metal hanging signs of modest size and well-designed proportions. The signs should be simple and limited to the relevant information relating to the shop and the services provided. In the conservation area or on listed buildings, projecting box signs are considered unsuitable. Non-internally illuminated hanging signs are necessary for their traditional appearance and simplicity. New hanging signs may graphically reflect the nature of the business or the name of the retailer

### Lettering

- Lettering should be traditionally sign-written. Individual letters mounted on minimal pins may be appropriate in some instances, usually in the absence of a fascia
- The size of lettering is to be proportional to the depth of the fascia leaving a border to the top and bottom
- When separate businesses occupy upper floors, the display of advertisements should be limited to lettering applied to windows. A suitable size and style need not spoil the elevation

### Canopies and Blinds

- Originally canopies and blinds were fitted to give some protection to the shoppers and shop window against rain and sun and can be a lively addition to the street scene
- Traditional blinds should fully retract into the blind box
- 'Dutch' fixed canopies (non-retractable) often made from shiny plastic are considered inappropriate and will not be permitted

### Illumination

Use of external illumination and low luminance levels would be appropriate to highlight the fascia signage where the premises is open at night; such as public houses, off-licenses, restaurants and chemists. The discrete location of fittings will be important to avoid clutter and must be focussed on the sign rather than the whole facade. Internally illuminated acrylic box signs and are not appropriate. Corporate signage should be adapted for the town centre retaining the usual characteristics but in traditional materials.

### Colours

Traditional colours for shopfronts and signage is appropriate. Subtle tones or other colours may be acceptable, depending on location. Bright or strident colours do not compliment the background of the local Lias stone or traditional finishes of the conservation area and should be avoided. Window joinery above the shopfront should be in historic shades and off-white. A matt or flat finish paint should be used.

### 'A' Boards

Free standing 'A' boards can cause obstruction to users of pavements and there is a proliferation of such signage in Keynsham. However, it is recognised that due to the wide street layout many retail and catering premises are not easily seen by the passer by. The Council's policy is that one 'A' board will be allowed for each business provided it does not impinge on access or use of the pavement and relates to signposting the business.

### Accessibility

Wherever it is practicable, alterations should ensure access for all through the main entrance by creating a clearly defined, well lit, unobstructed and level approach. Only in exceptional circumstances should disabled people be obliged to ring a bell or wait to be escorted onto the premises.



Freestanding 'A' board sign and projecting sign relating to the business activity. However the projecting sign would be improved if a hanging board rather than box sign



Standard corporate box sign and use of acrylic fascia

should be avoided on this listed building

## Glossary

A traditional shopfront is made up of a number of elements, which form a frame for the shop entrance and shop window. Each element has its own practical and visual function.

**Architrave:** moulded frame around a door or window.

**Fascia:** space within which the shop trading name can be displayed

**Blind Box:** contains a retractable blind

**Facade:** is the whole frontage of the building including shopfront and upper floors

**Pilasters:** separate each shop from its neighbours and define the width of the shopfront or the building

**Corbel or Console Bracket:** at top of pilaster and/or either end of fascia forming a bracket. Often moulded and decorative

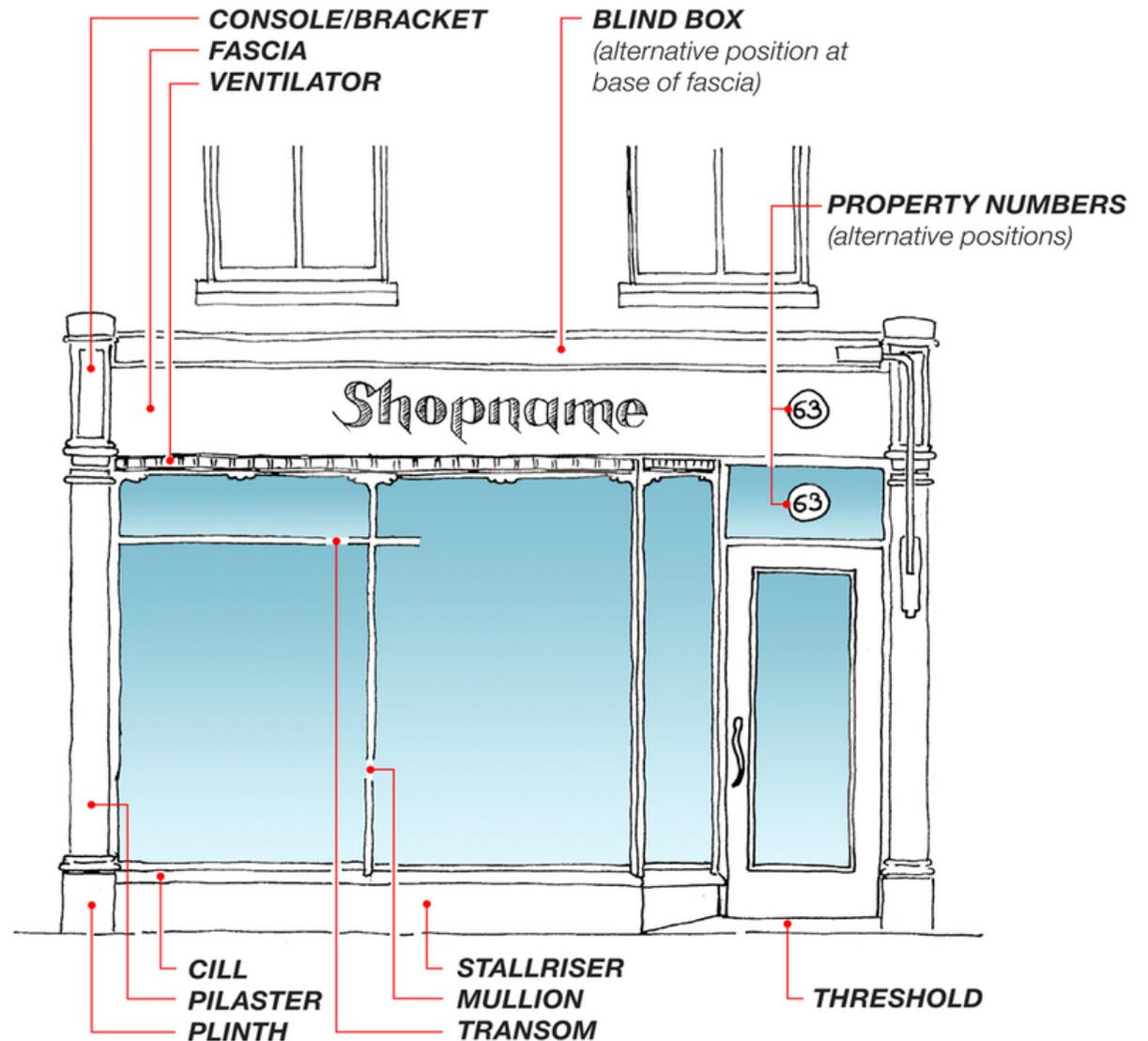
**Cornice:** defines the top of the shopfront and gives protection from the weather

**Mullion:** a vertical post or upright dividing a window or opening into two or more lights. vertical post or upright dividing a window or opening into two or more lights

**Transom:** a horizontal bar dividing the upper section of the window

**Stallriser:** gives protection at ground level and provides a solid base to the shopfront

**Threshold:** the bottom of the door frame usually raised to prevent water ingress



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