

THANET DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING GUIDANCE

Leaflet No 2



SHOPFRONT SECURITY SHUTTERS

INTRODUCTION

This leaflet is one of a series providing information and advice on various planning issues. It aims to provide guidance to shopkeepers on the design of their security shutters. The Council has adopted this guidance for Development Control purposes and the advice contained will constitute a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

If the security shutter is part of a new shopfront or refurbishment scheme, this leaflet should be read in conjunction with the leaflet on “Shopfront Design”.

Security shutters which are fitted internally do not usually need planning permission but it is important to note that if your property is a Listed Building and/or is located in a Conservation Area, additional consents are likely to be required.

SHOPFRONT SECURITY SHUTTERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE STREET SCENE

The vitality of town centres is promoted by encouraging mixed usage, such as shopping, offices, eating establishments and living accommodation (ie over the shops). This provides an atmosphere and attractiveness within which a town centre can prosper. This is the objective of Policy TC3 in the Isle of Thanet Local Plan.

However, it is widely accepted that excessive levels of security will not only have a detrimental impact on the town scape but will also have an adverse influence on the overall perception of a town centre. Highly visible crime prevention measures, such as security shutters, can give the impression of an unsafe or high-risk area prone to crime. Solid roller shutters in particular contribute markedly to this impression, and are both forbidding and unattractive. The resultant overall effect will be customers and visitors avoiding such centres, reducing trade, and creating no-go areas after dark. This could, ironically, increase the potential for crime, with the areas no longer benefiting from passive surveillance by shoppers and casual passers-by, thereby making shops more vulnerable to attack.

Towns which encourage night lighting of the interior of a shop window display, make streets more attractive to the public to window shop out-of-hours. With an increase in street activity and the ability for passers-by to see inside shops, vandals and thieves should be deterred.

The District Council, therefore, believe that “solid” security shutters should be avoided and less imposing methods should be sought so that the objective of Policy TC3 is not comprised.

ACCEPTABLE METHODS OF SECURITY

Any new security measures should aim to have as little impact on the character and appearance of the building and the general character of the area as possible. Figure One illustrates how inappropriate security measures can have an impact on the street.

Figure One

1. *Oppressive “solid” Shutters.*
2. *Obtrusive Shutter boxes*
3. *Inappropriately positioned Burglar Alarms*

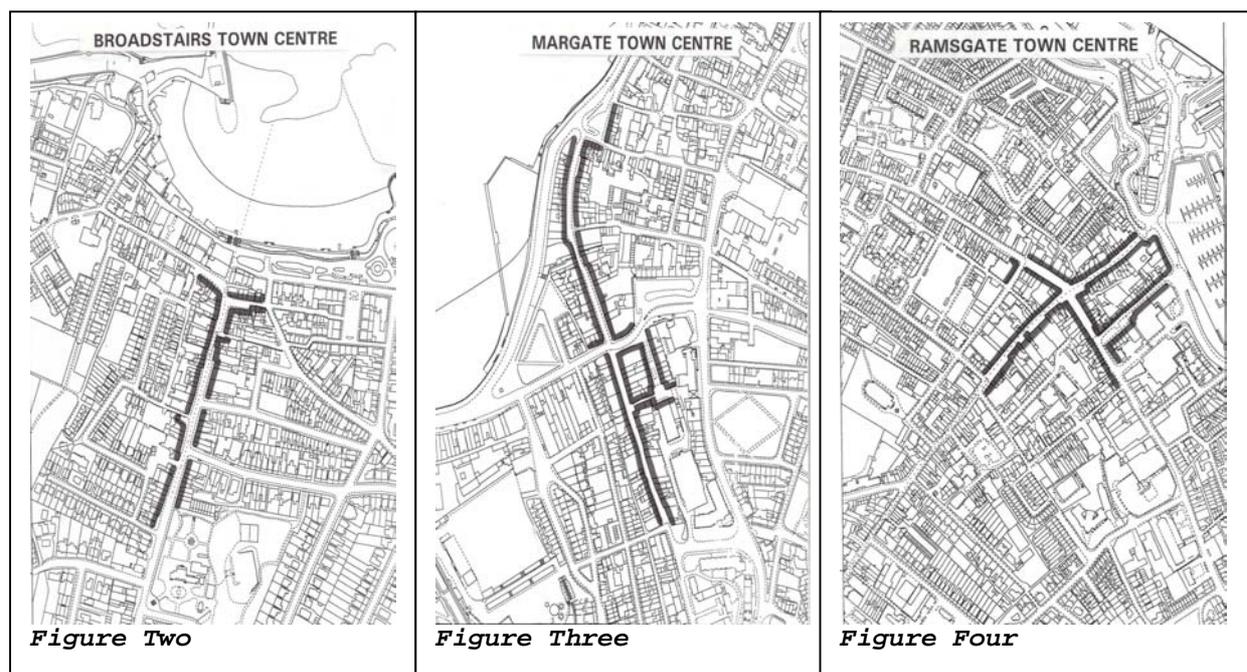


There are alternatives to solid security shutters for protecting retail properties. These include laminated or toughened glass, burglar alarms and internal or external “open style” shutters. “Open” shutters come in a variety of designs but all allow shop window displays to be viewed after opening hours.

It must be noted that large plate glass window shopfronts are expensive to replace and therefore more costly to insure. The installation of subdivisions in a shop front can add character and will be cheaper to replace if broken.

To this end, in all cases, the Council would encourage subdivisions of large shopfront windows with laminated or toughened glass and unobtrusively positioned burglar alarms.

If other methods for crime prevention are sought within the main shopping streets in the town centres of Broadstairs, Margate and Ramsgate (Figures Two, Three and Four show the areas respectively) only internal or external “open” shutters will be generally permitted. “Open” style shutters come in a number of designs of which the least intrusive will be encouraged. It may be necessary to incorporate “solid” sections in some to strengthen the design. However, such sections will only be allowed below knee level and above head height.



For all other areas, internal or external “open” shutters together with perforated shutters will generally be permitted. Perforated shutters usually come in two designs, 5.0 cm (two inch) flat and 7.5 cm (three inch) curved with perforations of about 2.5 mm in diameter and about the same distance apart. However, without proper consideration perforated shutters can have a similar impact on the street scene as “solid” shutters. In this case backlighting, surface treatment of the shutter and similar factors will be taken into account when considering applications for this design of shutter.

In addition, where the shutters are proposed for new buildings/shops or for extensively renewed shopfronts, boxes should be positioned behind or beneath the fascia as illustrated in Figure Five. For existing shopfronts where it can be demonstrated that such a set up would be unworkable, the boxes should be properly integrated into the design of the existing fascia. Careful proportioning, colour-matching, suitable signage, design and/or similar measures will be material considerations as to suitability.

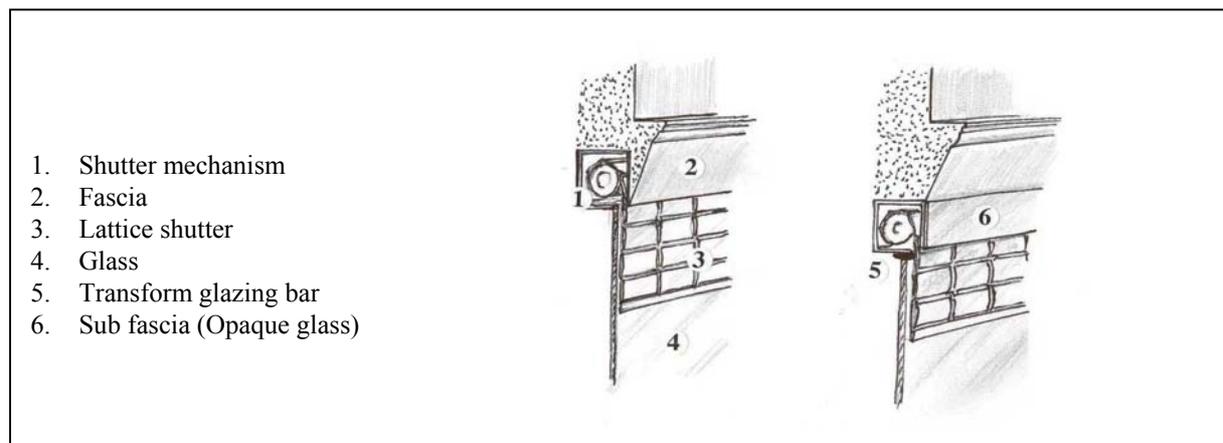


Figure Five Alternative methods of fixing external shutters.

CONSERVATION AREAS AND LISTED BUILDINGS

Shops in Listed Buildings and/or in Conservation Areas will be subject to more stringent controls depending upon the Building and the Conservation Area. It is important to reiterate that properties which are Listed Buildings will need additional consents.

UNAUTHORISED WORKS

The District Council is empowered to take enforcement action in respect of unauthorised works. Such works may involve the alteration or removal of offending works and reinstatement of features which have been removed. The Council may also pursue prosecution, which can result in the imposition of penalties.

For further information, please contact the Local Plans Sections at the following address:

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