

To be Retained by BSGA



Consultation Period:	None	To:
Development Plan:	Shop front design guide SPD – Adopted 15/6/20	
District:	Rotherham MBC	
Relevant Policies:	Passim	
Or Narrative (refs):	Passim	

Background: We commented at length of the draft of this SPD in October 2019 (qv).

Comment: The now adopted SPD has been somewhat amended to respond to our objections. There is now acceptance that internally illuminated fascia and projecting box signs (except for old, bulky ones and fully illuminated) are generally acceptable, particularly in shopping areas. And “plastic” materials are also acceptable on contemporary shopfronts.

But much of the SPD remains wrong and unacceptable; indeed, some of it is laughable. For example, paragraph 47 says “As a general rule, only one sign will be allowed per shop with an area no larger than 0.75m²”. Does anyone know of a shop with an area of less than 0.75m²?

Also, there are paragraphs which suggest that shopfronts should be designed so as to match their neighbours, e.g. paragraph 37 “Over time, alterations to shopfronts can lead to a disjointed appearance of a building and/or a loss of cohesion across a group of buildings in the street scene. When altering shopfronts, businesses and owners should aim to restore cohesion across architectural lines and design features of both the building itself and the adjacent buildings. Efforts should be made to establish visual order across all stories of a building or façade, as opposed to focusing on the ground floor shopfront in isolation” (some sort of designers’ coalition?). Like this, many of the paragraphs are total drivel.

At least (somewhat surprisingly) the Council have agreed to drop the requirement that adjacent shopfronts and advertisements should respect each other’s colour scheme!

But, more seriously, the Council still think that they can control the sign’s content and insist that “corporate” design be altered regardless of individual circumstance. The SPD still says that fascias and stallrisers should not exceed 20% of the shopfront’s height; and neon signs must be in “a single colour and limited palette”. Otherwise, designers are expected again to somehow vary the styles of illumination along the street because “a variety of subtle lighting styles will add interest.”

It remains to be seen how the Council will apply this nonsense. It is to be hoped that we have secured enough change to allow the majority of proposals to pass as acceptable.

And we can always point to the total unreliability and impracticability of the SPD as a whole. (more or less at the start, paragraph 23 states “In general, A-boards, signs that are larger

than 0.3m2 or illuminated, would require advertisement consent.” This is, of course, totally untrue; and any advice which contains this, and other totally incorrect statements must be regarded as dubious.)

Date sent to Council:

No further representations possible