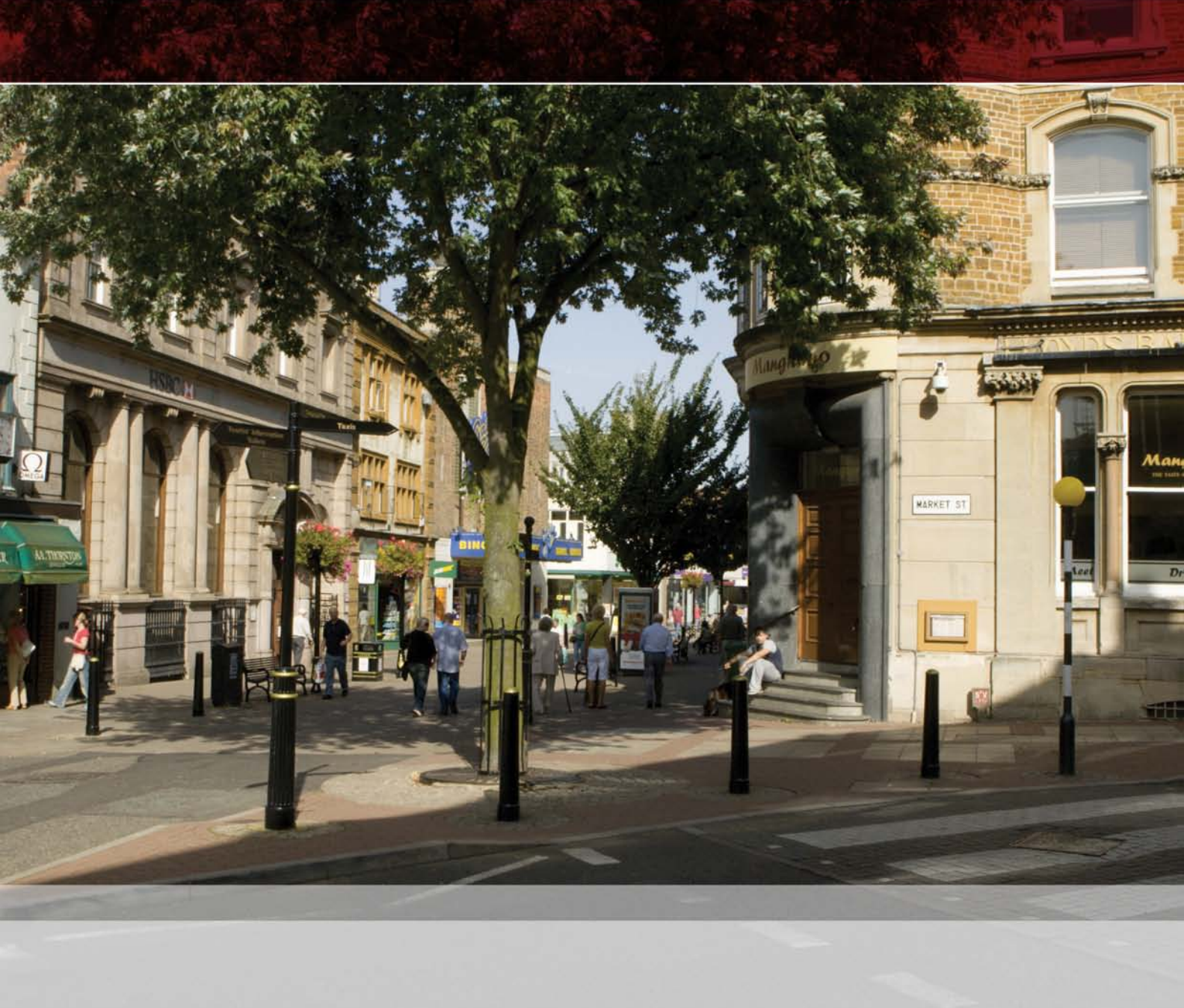


# Kettering Borough Shopfront Design Guidance



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## 1 Introduction

**1.1** This guidance provides potential applicants with an idea of the criteria used to assess applications relating to new shopfronts and shop signs and the principles of good shopfront design within Kettering Borough.

**1.2** Although aimed primarily at existing and proposed shops within Kettering Town Centre and the 'A6 Towns' of Burton Latimer, Desborough and Rothwell, the basic design principles are relevant to all shopfront design proposals across the Borough.

**1.3** This guidance should be read with saved policy 33 of the Kettering Borough Local Plan along with planning policies relevant to the geographic area of the proposal. Adopted Conservation Area Appraisals specific to the proposal site also offer additional design guidance.

### Shopfronts: Design Principles

- Shopfronts should be in keeping with the rest of the building, taking into account its age, style and materials.
- If in doubt follow classic design principles or talk to Development Services for design advice.
- The shopfront should be in proportion to the host building.
- One of the most important considerations when designing a shopfront is that the detailing is correct.
- In modern shopping areas distinctive modern designs using modern materials should be used in an innovative and original way.
- In traditional areas traditional classical shopfronts should be used.

**1.4** The images in this document are illustrative. They are provided to showcase examples of well-designed shopfronts. They are not intended to be prescriptive and innovative, well-considered design which incorporates high quality materials will always be welcome in Kettering Borough.

## 2 Kettering Town Centre Regeneration



**This modern unit in Leicester uses modern materials with traditional proportions and minimal signage to create an attractive frontage**

**2.1** Good shop front design supports the aim of the regeneration of Kettering Town Centre in the creation of distinctive quarters as illustrated below.

**2.2** To help turn this vision into a reality an ambitious programme of redevelopment is in progress outlined in detail in the Kettering Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP).

**2.3** This includes developing areas for new restaurants, high street brand shopping, both large department and chain stores and 'niche' retail outlets. Improvements to the look and feel of streets and transportation links are also in hand and there are plans for investment into new office space, capitalising on Kettering's ease of access to London's St. Pancras Station.

**2.4** Every project delivered builds on the success of its predecessor and will provide the building blocks upon which future projects are delivered. The delivery of the overall vision will ensure the revitalisation and success of Kettering Borough.

**2.5** This guidance should be read with the following key documents:

- Emerging policies in the Town Centre AAP
- Kettering Conservation Area Appraisal
- Saved policies 33 and K9 of the Local Plan and the policies contained within the emerging Site Specifics DPD.



**Kettering Town Centre AAP map showing Kettering's Quarters**

**2.6** Also the Draft Urban Codes SPD which identifies the architectural and spatial characteristics of each quarter and will have a bearing on the scale and proportions of the shopfront.

We do not wish to stifle creative designs or approaches to shopfront and shop sign design. Instead we want to provide a framework for creating designs and ideas which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the shopping areas.

We want to present the best possible advertisement for businesses by providing an attractive and legible environment in which to shop. It is widely accepted that an attractive, well presented shopping street will provide people with a more pleasant shopping experience with the result of higher custom.

## 3 Kettering's Commercial Character

**3.1** The buildings testify to Kettering's transformation from Medieval market town to Victorian industrial centre. Georgian frontages are combined with grand Victorian banks, public houses and the occasional smart 1930s classical or modern building. Although most shops have witnessed several changes of use and management, there is still a consistent urban character throughout the Town Centre.



**An image of Market Place from the early twentieth century**

**3.2** Three particular street improvement schemes of the early 20th century revolved around the increased expansion of commercial activity highlighting the progress of development and change to the Town Centre. The widening of the southern end of the High Street on the corner of Market Street and the redevelopment of Market Street (and its Jacobethan style shops) were followed by the removal of the former buildings (Market Hill), which outlined the southern edge of the Market Place.

**3.3** Later in the 20th century Kettering saw further redevelopment including the demolition of buildings on Bakehouse Hill and the construction of the Newlands Centre. This introduced a modern, precinct style of shopping to the town and moved the commercial heart from the Market Place and High Street to Gold Street.

**3.4** This mix of commercial buildings has resulted in an assorted combination of shopfronts from the traditional to the modern plate glass and plastic frontages.

**3.5** In recent years there has been a revival in commercial and shopping activity in the Town Centre. Like many UK towns, the growing use of mass-produced or inappropriately detailed design and materials is a contributory factor to a loss of distinctive character. In Kettering change has been particularly noticeable when compared with the photograph of Market Square in 1914.

## **4 Burton Latimer's Commercial Character**

**4.1** Burton Latimer's character as a historical communication link is still evident today. However, from an extensive programme of demolition and rebuilding much of the commercial character is now based on the records and history of several shops and their owners.

**4.2** Around the original village settlement along Church Street there is still character in terms of the age and form of buildings while the High Street, in comparison, is a denser more enclosed environment, displaying a mix of building styles. In contrast to many other historic towns such as Kettering, the buildings are not all two and three stories. Instead the single/two-storey cottage style is more common.



**Burton Latimer High Street**

**4.3** In recent years retailers have moved up the High Street towards the north leaving an unequal spread of shops to the mid and southern end. The character of the western side of the central High Street area has also changed, where it was once an 18th century farmhouse (Denton's Farm) it is now the Churchill Way retail development. The loss of the farmhouse is a result of the change from rural economy to major housing development with a supporting retail focus.

## 5 Desborough's Commercial Character



**The George, Desborough. A traditional stone building**

**5.1** Desborough is not a typical small town and past decisions have significantly changed the appearance of the town centre, along with a general lack of investment over a sustained period of time. The town has several villages nearby that use it as a local centre for day to day activities and so it performs an important function in terms of helping to sustain local rural communities.

**5.2** The major phase of Desborough's development occurred during the Victorian and Edwardian periods of the late 19th and early 20th century. During this period the boot and shoe industry and iron ore extraction triggered Desborough's transformation into a town and created much of the character we see today.

**5.3** Station Road is the main retailing area of the town and while busy during retail hours lacks life and vitality at other times. Compared with the centre of Rothwell, of similar size to Desborough, there is a significant difference in town centre activity.

**5.4** In general terms Station Road is characterised by building frontages up to the pavement edge creating an enclosed view up the street while the buildings are aligned parallel to the street and are mainly two storey. A few of the properties retain original features and some examples have interesting and unusual elements creating variety in the street.

**5.5** However, the majority of buildings have been significantly altered with the neglect of the fabric of some buildings detracting from the visual quality. Where these have been altered in an insensitive way it detracts from a pleasant street environment.

**5.6** The traditional materials in the area were red brick and natural slate, with stone window surrounds and sills. Sliding sash windows were typical on domestic buildings and above shops. Shop fronts would have been traditionally constructed in timber, although there are very few examples of buildings that retain this character.

**5.7** During the 1970's the area in and around the High Street was severely affected by road improvements to the former A6. This led to many of the traditional buildings being demolished and in their place new buildings were erected in locations and of a style which did not contain the street in the same way. The materials, scale and design of the buildings also departed from those that were characteristic of the High Street. These changes drastically altered the appearance and feel of the area.

## 6 Rothwell's Commercial Character

**6.1** Out of the A6 towns Rothwell has the greatest historic feel to its centre due to the number of remaining buildings that pre-date the 20th century.

**6.2** Rothwell developed far earlier than Desborough, and by 1154 the town had acquired a Sunday market which flourished. The settlement grew substantially in population and size. However, by the 18th century the market was in severe decline. The market ceased to operate during the mid 19th century, but the town was able to retain its urban character and status as a commercial centre for the surrounding area.





**Central Rothwell**

**6.3** The central shopping area (based around High Street, Bridge Street and Market Square) also developed during the 18th and 19th centuries, although a significant number of older buildings survive in the town centre. There was substantial development of the town during the course of the 19th century and a number of high status houses were erected in the centre of the town, many of which were later converted into shops. It was only in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that purpose built shops began to be erected - these included both small, corner plot developments and larger commercial enterprises.

**6.4** There is a mixed range of shops in Rothwell, including small, low status corner shops, buildings with more elaborate frontages for specialist shops and the larger commercial constructions. The survivals are clearly outweighed by buildings which have had modern shop frontages inserted into them. Some of the older properties may have the Medieval frontage to the rear of the plot, rather than at the present frontage.

## 7 Character of Street and Building

**7.1** Most traditional shopping streets contain a great deal of variety. The design of the shopfront should take into account the characteristics and pace of the street. As Kettering's shopping area contains a varied amount of style and ages of buildings there is variety in the height, width and style of properties. Therefore identical designs are not necessarily the ideal solution in terms of street scene with the exception of terrace properties, for example Piccadilly Buildings which have been designed as a single composition.

**7.2** Shopfronts should not extend over more than one building. If adjacent properties are occupied by one business this must be shown by means other than a single shopfront spanning the two units.



**Piccadilly Buildings in Kettering: an example of a row of traditional shops with well-designed and appropriate signage**

In terms of traditional shopfronts, these or any other remaining features should be retained and repaired. It is often cheaper to repair an existing shopfront than to replace it. In a number of instances a traditional shopfront may have been covered by inappropriate frontage, if this is the case then the original shopfront should be restored to its former glory.

**7.3** Replacement shopfronts in a traditional style should be accurately and correctly detailed in accordance to the age and style of the building. Carefully considered details and mouldings do not necessarily add much to the cost but can add to an impression of quality.

**7.4** Existing shopfronts or any feature of a shopfront which is out of keeping with the street or building is not a valid reason for replacement with an equally inappropriate design. At the first opportunity the signage should be replaced to help improve the appearance and quality of the shop.