

The Town and Country Planning Acts 1934 – 1981

The Isle of Man Planning Scheme (Development Plan) Order 1982

SHOP-FRONTS

This Circular is issued by the Department of Local Government and the Environment in pursuance of the powers vested in it by Section 5 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1934 and Article 11(2)(a)(vi) of the Isle of Man Planning Scheme (Development Plan) Order 1982.

1. Introduction

Following the Resolution of Tynwald in February, 1987, and the affirmation and application of policies in accordance therewith by the Department, investment in Town Centre shops has increased considerably. The quality of the built environment has improved, and is expected to improve still further with the construction and completion of several major schemes, particularly in central Douglas.

However, the design of new shop-fronts in recent years has not always been successful, and it is felt that the absence of any written statement of policy from the Department may have contributed to this outcome. The policy outlined in this Circular will apply to applications for –

- a) the erection of new shops
- b) significant development of existing shop premises (where the opportunity may be taken to require the alteration or replacement of existing unfortunate shop-fronts); and
- c) the installation of new shop-fronts.

2. General Principles

Surviving historic shop-fronts, and any others of character or quality, should be preserved. New shop-fronts should respect the scale, materials, colour, and design of the building above. The design of signage should be considered as part of the overall scheme.

3. Detailed Design

It is neither desirable nor possible to be specific about detailed design, since the variety of contexts and, indeed, acceptable solutions is extensive. However, the following points may be helpful –

- a) amalgamation of shop-fronts can destroy the vertical rhythm and character of traditional shopping streets, and should be avoided;

- b) stall-risers should usually be panelled and/or rendered; where a stall-riser has been removed as part of a previous scheme, the next opportunity should be taken for its reinsertion;
- c) chain-stores should be prepared to modify their "house-style" in response to particular buildings;
- d) the scale of the building can often be successfully acknowledged by using window divisions.

4. Signage

Illuminated plastic box fascias are seldom appropriate, and never so in Conservation Areas. Signage should be by painting the fascia or applying three-dimensional letters, preferably of wood or brass. The fascia should state only the name of the trader and the nature of his trade. Advertisements should not be included. Projecting signs create clutter, and will not usually be permitted. It justified by, say, an unusual siting within the shopping area, such signs should be of the hanging type, suspended from a bracket. The Highway Authority should be consulted regarding the clearance to the highway. There should not be any shop signage above ground floor fascia level.

5. Access for the Disabled

The principal entrance to a shop must be designed to accommodate unassisted wheelchair users. Steps of any height must be avoided, and ramps must be no steeper than 1:12. Detailed guidance is given in B.S. 5810: Access for Disabled to Buildings, with which at least one, and preferably all entrance should comply.

6. Local Plans

Reference should be made to Local Plans, and, in particular, to the location of Conservation Areas, within which greater attention should be given to detail, such as lettering, door furnishings, and other ironmongery.

7. Planning Applications

It will nearly always be necessary to produce elevations showing the whole of the particular building and part, at least, of adjoining buildings. It is suggested that this will assist not only assessment of the scheme but also the design process itself. It is recommended that, once the context has been accurately established, and the sketch scheme produced, the designer should consult with the officers of the Department's planning section.