

Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document (SPD3)

Consultation Statement

June 2018

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 12(a) and (b) of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Background

High quality shopfronts can radically improve the character and appearance of an area. This enhances the experience of the people visiting town centres. It is one strand of a number of initiatives that Brent will have to take in dealing comprehensively with increasing the vitality and viability of town centres, which is a key corporate priority.

The document also addresses the likely increase in demand for changes of use of shop premises to residential. The draft Supplementary Planning Document will assist with both the determination of prior approvals for permitted development and planning applications.

Brent's existing Shopfronts and Shop Signs Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG7), adopted in 2003, is outdated, referring to planning policies that are no longer part of the development plan. This means that its weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications is limited. In addition the draft Shopfronts Supplementary Planning Document (SPD3) provides more extensive guidance and clarifies design expectations for applicants, planning officers and the community on what is likely to be granted planning permission.

Area of coverage

The London Borough of Brent, with the exception of areas in which the Old Oak and Park Royal Mayoral Development Corporation is the local planning authority.

Consultation

The SPD has undergone public consultation (Regulation 13) between 1st February 2018 and 15th March 2018. In accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement, during the consultation period:

- the SPD and consultation statement were available on a dedicated website www.brent.gov.uk/SPD and in Brent Libraries at the following addresses:
 - The Library at Willesden Green, 95 High Road, Willesden NW10 2SF
 - Ealing Road Library, Coronet Parade, Ealing Road, HA0 4BA
 - Harlesden Library, Craven Park Road, Harlesden, NW10 8SE
 - Kilburn Library, 42 Salusbury Road, Kilburn NW6 6NN
 - Kingsbury Library, 522 - 524 Kingsbury Road, Kingsbury NW9 9HE
 - Wembley Library, Brent Civic Centre, Engineer's Way, Wembley HA9 0FJ

- interested groups on the Local Plan consultation database were emailed and invited to comment
- the consultation has been publicised via social media

Consultation comments have been taken into consideration in the preparation of SPD3 and responses are identified below. These comments together with recommended changes to SPD3 were presented to Cabinet in June 2018 for its consideration and adoption.

Summary of Responses and Recommended Changes

Consultation responses and changes to the document are set out in the recommendations below. Additions to text are underlined whilst deletions are highlighted with ~~strikethrough~~.

Respondent	Highways England
Response	No objection
Officer Response	Noted
Recommendation	None
Respondent	Willesden Green Town Team
Response	<p>Willesden Green Conservation Zone</p> <p>The Willesden Green Conservation Area designated in January 1993, is a shopping parade over one mile long occupying the High Road, Walm Lane and their tributary roads and stretching from St Andrews Church to Willesden Green Underground Station. It is predominantly a retail centre comprising of Victorian, Edwardian as well as Arts & Crafts era architecture, so the SPD will have a major impact on the future preservation of this heritage.</p> <p>This shopping parade is punctuated by a number of listed buildings by well-know architects including St Andrew's Church (1886-87), the original Willesden Green Library(1893-94) and Barclay's Bank (1902) premises, the Spotted Dog (1881) and the Metropolitan Railway Station (1924).</p> <p>The Willesden Green Conservation Zone is at particular risk of insensitive development due to the pressures of a growing population and the popularity of this well connected neighbourhood. The sheer number of Shopfronts in the Conservation Zone means that there are always changes being made, which affect the character of buildings and over time the character of the whole area. The Shopfront design guide and its enforcement are key to preventing the erosion of the historic character of the area.</p> <p>a) The Conservation Zone</p> <p>i) For the reasons stated, we would like to see a Design Guide specifically for the Willesden Green Conservation Zone, as there are for others such as the Mapesbury Conservation Zone and Queens Park.</p> <p>ii) For the avoidance of ambiguity, the Shopfront Planning Document should also list all of the Conservation Zones across Brent.</p> <p>b) 1.0 Introduction / 1.2 Background to Document</p> <p>The Design Statements submitted with an application for any work to the shopfront should demonstrate not only how the proposal accords with the guidelines in the SPD3, but also the Conservation Zone.</p> <p>c) 2.2. Principle 2: Attractive Display Windows</p> <p>There are too many examples in our area where retailers (particularly newsagents) have cluttered window displays. It would be very helpful if this section of SPD3 provided greater clarity on the allowances and objections on such display windows.</p> <p>d) 2.3 Principle 3: Uncluttered Shop Signs and Advertisements</p>

	<p>i) A-boards – there should be greater restrictions on the use of A-boards. Generally the pavements along Walm Lane and the High Road are cluttered with shop A-boards. These serve very little purpose and should be removed completely.</p> <p>ii) Projecting or hanging signs – there should be great restrictions on such signs. Again, Walm Lane and the High Road contain many projecting or hanging signs, of different size and positioning. This creates a messy and overly busy high street, which contradicts the aims of SPD3. Also, in the digital age of Google Maps etc., the purpose of the projecting or hanging signs (to assist in people locating a shop) is largely redundant. It is hoped SPD3 can be updated to ensure such signs are prohibited.</p> <p>e) Estate Agent Boards Additional restrictions to be added alongside ‘A-boards’, to prevent the installation of Estate Agent ‘for sale/let’ boards on or above shopfronts. These boards in varying sizes become eyesores, often fixed to stick out over the pavement and eventually become permanent fixtures on buildings scattered along the entire high street. Such boards are sometimes left on properties indefinitely and attract vermin (i.e. pigeons). In the same way as projecting or hanging signs, these Estate Agent boards should not be permitted – particularly in a conservation zone.</p> <p>f) 2.8 Principle 8: Avoiding light pollution i) The SPD states that ‘illuminated signs larger than 5 square meters will only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances’. This suggests that illuminated signs up to 5 square meters would be acceptable, however it is unclear whether ‘illuminated’ signs would include neon signs or fully lit background panels (e.g. similar to Foxtons or Lezziz Express on Station Parade) which can be excessively large and bright. ii) For clarity, to include an additional point that ‘illuminated projecting or hanging signs are not permitted’ (often seen in the shape of green neon cross signs outside Pharmacies)</p> <p>g) 2.9 Checklist : Shopfront design Consider addition of an additional: ‘Principle 9 – Do the proposed changes meet the restrictions and guidelines of the Conservation Zone?’</p> <p>h) 3.6 Checklist : Converting shops to residential Consider addition of another principle: ‘Principle 6 – Do the proposed changes meet the restrictions and guidelines of the Conservation Zone?’</p> <p>i) Services : Shopfronts & Converting Shops to Residential Space i) Particular attention should be paid to create adequate and sanitary storage facilities for bins and waste outside the front or rear of Shopfronts and Residential properties. ii) Likewise clear guidance should be given for siting of services including Satellite dishes not just for Shopfronts, but also residential conversions. General – it would be very helpful for users of SPD3 to understand the enforcement and penalties of noncompliance. Such details should be included here, otherwise, there is little or no incentive to comply with the guidelines.</p>
Officer Response	<p>a) Willesden shopping district is mentioned in 2.1 however there are no immediate plans to update Willesden Green’s CA Character Appraisal with a section on shopfronts at present.</p> <p>b) Re-write to include “and any other material consideration including conservation design guides”.</p> <p>c) It is hard to quantify and often only happens in use, after planning applications are decided and is often outside the scope of planning control. The current wording is hoped to be sufficient to indicate the objectives and make judgements on a case by case basis.</p> <p>d) The document already states that A boards “should generally be avoided”. We have removed the word “generally” to strengthen the language. Projecting signs – As these are a common feature of well-designed traditional shopfronts, it would go too far to ban these and it is felt sufficient limits are described within the document to sufficiently reduce negative effects.</p>

	<p>e) Temporary advertisements such as estate agent boards often benefit from 'deemed consent' under national regulations and so the Council cannot control such boards in these circumstances.</p> <p>f) Agreed. Backlight signs should be avoided in favour over up/down lights.</p> <p>g) and h) Agreed. (Conservation Area, not 'Zone')</p> <p>i) i) Servicing and waste is mentioned in 3.4 ii) Satellite dishes are a problem on the street scene and can be mentioned.</p> <p>General - agreed – include powers of enforcement in introduction.</p>
Recommendation	<p>a) Willesden shopping district is mentioned in 2.1 however there are no immediate plans to update Willesden Green's CA Character Appraisal with a section on shopfronts at present. No change</p> <p>b) 1.0 Introduction / 1.2 Background to Document - Proposals to create, alter, replace or restore a shopfront or to convert a shop unit to residential use should conform to the relevant design principles in this SPD <u>and any other material consideration including conservation design guides.</u></p> <p>c) No change</p> <p>d) The use of A-boards and similar type of on-street advertising can create visual clutter and obstruction to movement and should <u>generally</u> be avoided. It may only be acceptable within the <u>private</u> forecourt of the shop and where it does not hinder pedestrian movement. Modest designs, <u>sizes</u> and colours should be used, in keeping with the fascia designs</p> <p>e) <u>The installation of Estate Agent 'for sale/let' boards on or above shopfronts should be avoided over and above what is permitted as deemed consent in national regulations.</u></p> <p>f) Flashing or variably lit shop signs are not normally given consent. Illuminated signs larger than 5 square metres will only be appropriate in exceptional circumstances. Illuminated projecting or hanging signs are not permitted.</p> <p>g) 2.9 Checklist : Shopfront design <u>Principle 9 – Are there any other material considerations to consider such as conservation design guides?</u></p> <p>h) 3.6 Checklist : Converting shops to residential <u>General Policy – Are there any other material considerations to consider such as conservation design guides?</u></p> <p>i) ii) The storage of domestic waste should not dominate the frontage of the building <u>and satellite dishes should be avoided on building frontages where permission is required.</u></p> <p>General: Add in 1.3: It is advisable to contact the Development Management Team before carrying out any alterations or displaying advertising. <u>The Council's Planning Enforcement Team holds powers of enforcement to ensure compliance with legislation, policies and guidance.</u></p>
Respondent	Historic England
Response	<p>Historic England welcomes the production of this document. It contains clear and concise guidance, which should help applicants and decision makers preserve historic shopfronts and enhance modern ones; improving the management of the historic environment and promoting good design. To strengthen the document you may wish to include an appendix with images of particularly good shopfronts that the Council would resist the loss of. An example of where this has been done elsewhere is the Soho and Chinatown Conservation Area Audit in Westminster. Such an appendix might also allow you to include greater detail about different types of buildings that have developed particular styles of shopfronts such as banks and pubs.</p> <p>In relation to the SEA screening report, Historic England agrees with the Council's conclusion that the SPD is unlikely to have a significant effect on the environment. As this document provides guidance to support Council policies</p>

	that have already been the subject to SEA, we also agree that a full SEA would not be required.
Officer Response	Agreed and noted.
Recommendation	Appendix included
Respondent	Natural England
Response	The topic of the Supplementary Planning Document does not appear to relate to our interests to any significant extent. We therefore do not wish to comment.
Officer Response	Noted.
Recommendation	No change
Respondent	Cathy Munonyedi
Response	<p>I love the new draft Shopfront SPD it is a very attractive and informative document which I fully support and will be useful with regards the forthcoming revamp of Kingsbury Road town centre frontages where there are many poor examples of clutter and unsightly spillage onto the pavement area of goods. I have suggested some additional wording to Para.1.3 highlighted in blue.</p> <p>1.3 Permissions and consents Most alterations to a shop front will require planning permission. However, routine maintenance works generally do not. In the case of listed buildings, locally listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas there are further restrictions. This is to ensure that alterations and additions do not harm the appearance of the area and are sympathetic to the integrity of the original building. In addition, Advertisement Consent may also be required to display a shop sign. It is advisable to contact the Development Management Team before carrying out any alterations or displaying advertising and in relation to the change of use.</p>
Officer Response	Overall positive support noted. Change in wording considered unnecessary as this sentence is in a paragraph only about shopfronts. Change of use is covered in the paragraph below.
Recommendation	No change
Respondent	Network Rail
Response	Network Rail has no comments on the above policy
Officer Response	Noted
Recommendation	No change
Respondent	Agnes Peyser
Response	I believe that recessed shopfronts (if not already existing) should not be permitted because of potential Anti-social behaviour use. Also rigid structures like wooden terraces/decks should not be permitted even on private land in front of a shop. A boards should be placed against the frontage of the shop inroaching a maximum of 80cm onto the pavement. Permissible sizes of a boards should be defined. A boards are a danger to pedestrians.
Officer Response	Noted. Recessed shops are in practice not proposed by land owners as they reduce shop size. A-boards are already covered in the text as to be avoided.
Recommendation	See Willesden Green Town Team section above for minor changes in text on A boards
Respondent	S. Helbig
Response	I am concerned that the council is imposing such detailed requirements from alignment of windows between floors to colours, materials or character/style of building fronts having to conform with neighbouring buildings. It takes away individuality and creates too much complexity for commercial or private owners. Basic aspects like preserving space for pedestrians, safety, privacy, historic and environmental considerations are obvious. But anything beyond should be limited to an absolute minimum. Any subjectivity or vagueness should also be avoided (cluttering, character, colours etc.). It is important to preserve individuality and opportunity over bureaucratisation and complexity of regulations.
Officer Response	Noted. The guidance is considered necessary to retain or improve shopfronts and high streets and allow sufficient opportunity for individuality. A level of unity

	and coherent character, building on existing positive character, are essential for a high quality environment.
Recommendation	No change