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External
Shutters on
Retail/
Commercial
Premises

Wyre Borough
Council

Supplementary
Planning
Guidance

Adopted for
Development Control
Purposes
- September, 1998

EXTERNAL SHUTTERS ON RETAIL/ COMMERCIAL PREMISES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The installation of external security shutters on commercial properties is taking place at an increasing rate as a direct response to perceived increases in theft and vandalism as well as requirements by insurers to improve security.
- 1.2 Unsympathetic shutters can, however, have a cumulatively detrimental impact on an area, giving the impression of a hostile and aggressive environment. This discourages pedestrian use whilst encouraging vandalism. By deterring public use, the benefit of passive surveillance is lost, resulting in areas which lack activity or appear to be deserted and more attractive to criminals.
- 1.3 The Council is concerned about the conflict of interest between businesses wishing to improve security and the appearance and quality of the built environment. The town centres within Wyre Borough, some of which include Conservation Areas, secondary shopping streets and shopping parades within residential neighbourhoods are the areas of main concern.
- 1.4 The Government has published guidance relating to the use of shutters in Circular 5/94 'Planning Out Crime' as it recognises the significance of this conflict of interest.

2. GUIDANCE - AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The aim of this guidance is to seek to maintain and improve the appearance and quality of the built environment. By discouraging unsympathetic development and promoting good design, it is possible to achieve a safer and more welcoming environment, increasing public confidence and reducing the opportunity for crime and vandalism.

This guidance has the following objectives:

- (i) To inform developers and the general public of the need for planning permission and of the Council's approach to the installation of external shutters;
- (ii) To improve the character, appearance and security of commercial areas;
- (iii) To assist applicants in identifying those designs likely to receive planning permission, and
- (iv) To achieve a co-ordinated approach throughout the Borough.

3. SECURITY SHUTTERS ON COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

- 3.1 The installation of external shutters is likely to materially affect the external appearance of a building. The installation of permanently fixed external shutters, as opposed to removable shutters, constitutes development and requires planning permission.
- 3.2 The installation of internal shutters behind a window is unlikely to require planning permission.
- 3.3 Where the building affected is a Listed Building, Listed Building Consent is also required. Failure to obtain such consent before work begins is an offence under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas), Act, 1990.

4. ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

- 4.1 To minimise the impact of security shutters, the Council encourages the use of solutions other than external shutters. These should be seen as a last resort. There are a number of measures which can be taken which do not detrimentally affect the appearance of the property whilst providing improved security. These include:

- (i) Strengthening doorways and their

- locks, hinges and security devices;
- (ii) Providing alarm systems;
- (iii) Providing bright interior lighting;
- (iv) Installing strengthened glass - the use of laminated or toughened glass reduces incidental damage and theft compared with the normal clear float glass which breaks into large sharp pieces;
- (v) Reducing the size of each glazed area by incorporating additional glazing bars. The windows thereby become less susceptible to incidental damage and that which is damaged is cheaper to replace;
- (vi) Carefully selecting internal shutters - these should be of an open grille type to enable clear views into the premises during the evenings when lighting is left on, and
- (vii) Constructing solid stall risers (the vertical surface from the pavement to the window sill) reduces the amount of low level glass and is an effective deterrent to ram raiders.

5. EXTERNAL SHUTTERS

5.1 Although there are a variety of shutter designs available, proposals for external shutters in town centres, Conservation Areas and areas of concentrations of commercial premises should include the following:

- (i) Grille-type shutters should be of an open nature. Grilles can, to different degrees depending on the particular design, obscure or distort the appearance of the shop front. The most subtle and delicate designs minimise this impact. Ideally, grille sizes should be small enough to deflect missiles but slim enough to maintain a clear view of the goods displayed.

- (ii) Shutter housings should be positioned behind the fascia where practicable, or integrated within the shop front to make it as unobtrusive as possible. External shutter housings will not normally be acceptable in most circumstances.
- (iii) External shutters should not extend below window level and should leave the stall risers visible. Shutters should not obscure design features of the property such as pilasters, cornices and fascias.
- (iv) The shutters must correlate with the size of the openings to be covered. A wide shop frontage covered by a continuous shutter has much more impact than individual shutters on smaller openings.
- (v) Recessed doors should be protected by storm doors, grilles or gates the full height and width of the entrance. Appropriate lighting can enhance security.
- (vi) Doors flush with the frontage can be secured by open grilles.
- (vii) Shutters and shutter guides should be in colour to match and enhance the existing shop front, rather than be of a plain galvanised finish.

5.2 All applications for shutters on commercial or other premises will be dealt with on their own merits having regard to the above. Within Conservation Areas, the Local Planning Authority has to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

5.3 Solid shutters in the vast majority of circumstances will not normally be considered acceptable due to their detrimental impact on the street scene. In fact, such shutters can allow thieves to enter by a different route and rob the premises unseen from the street. In those cases where solid shutters are approved their finish and colour should be agreed

with the Council. Where it appears likely that an application for the installation of solid shutters will not be viewed favourably, discussions will be arranged between the applicant and the insurers to seek a compromise solution.

- 5.3 Shutters and grilles on Listed Buildings will be permitted only in the most exceptional circumstances.

6. ADVICE

- 6.1 If you are proposing to carry out development and wish to discuss your proposal and the Council guidelines please contact the Planning and Traffic Services Section at the Civic Centre, Poulton-le-Fylde. Telephone Number: 01253 891000.

NOTE: There are currently nine

Conservation Areas in Wyre. These are: Pharos (Fleetwood), Albert Square (Fleetwood), The Mount (Fleetwood), Poulton Town Centre, Churchtown, Garstang Town Centre, Calder Vale, Scorton and Dolphinholme (part in Lancaster).