

# Shopfront security

A guide to Medway Council's planning policies



September 2015

## **Introduction: Guide to shopfront security**

If you own or run a business in Medway and you are thinking of installing additional or replacement security measures at your business premises anywhere in Medway, this guidance note applies to you. It also addresses requirements for Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas. It does not introduce any new policies but it is an expansion of, and explanation of The Medway Local Plan 2003, Policy BNE9. This requires the retention of traditional shopfronts and discourages the use of roller shutters and grills unless it can be demonstrated that these are necessary.

The best protection from vandalism and crime in a commercial area comes from having a mixture of commercial and residential accommodation and for there to be people using the streets during the day and at night. This provides an area with `natural surveillance`.

It is often thought that solid external roller shutters are the best way to protect shops and commercial premises from vandalism and theft. In fact, the use of these types of measure can have the reverse effect, creating a seemingly hostile environment where people feel unsafe, thus discouraging them from going there at night. The lack of natural surveillance then makes the area an easy target for vandals and thieves. If thieves do break in, the shutters will hide them from passersby. **For these reasons the Council's policy is against the fitting of solid roller shutters to shopfronts.**

It is recognised that some shops may need added security measures because of the nature of their business. However, a balance must be struck between the need for security and the quality of the environment.

This guide sets out some of the additional security measures that business owners may wish to use, and explains when and what types of planning consent may be required.

### **What happens if I do not apply for listed building or planning permission to install security measures and I do not follow the rules set out in this guidance?**

If the security measures do not conform with the policies set out in this guidance, the Council can serve an 'enforcement notice' on you. This requires you to remove or alter the measures so that they are acceptable. If you do not comply with this, the Council can take you to court.

It is a criminal offence carry out work that damages the historic or architectural importance of a listed building.

## **Consultation**

A draft version of this guide was discussed at the Chatham and Rochester Business Forums, and was sent to Kent Police and Secured by Design in May 2015. The guide has been revised as a result of comments received.

## Do I need planning permission or listed building consent for security measures?

**All buildings:** Planning permission is usually required for the installation or replacement of external security measures including security shutters and grilles. The rules are slightly tighter for buildings within Conservation Areas. If you are in any doubt, please contact the Planning Department.

**Listed Buildings:** Some buildings are 'listed' as being of historic or architectural importance. Special planning controls apply to these buildings. Listed building consent is required when the security measures you are planning to install will affect the special architectural or historic character of the building, **both inside and outside the building**. If you are in any doubt, please contact a Medway Council conservation officer.

If planning permission or listed building consent is required, you must apply to the Planning Department at Medway Council before carrying out any work.

Do I require planning permission or listed building consent to install security measures?		
	<i>Planning permission</i>	<i>Listed building consent *</i>
<i>Laminated glass</i>	No- not required.	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>Internal security camera</i>	No- not required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>Internal grille</i>	No- not required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>Reduced size glazing panes</i>	Planning permission is required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>External security camera</i>	Unless the camera is very small, planning permission will be required for buildings in conservation areas.	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>External timber shutter</i>	Yes- Planning permission required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>External demountable grille</i>	Yes- Planning permission required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>Gate (across front door)</i>	Yes- Planning permission required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>External roller grille (punch lathe or perforated)</i>	Yes- Planning permission required	Yes- listed building consent required
<i>External roller shutter</i>	Yes- Planning permission required	Yes- listed building consent required

\* If my building is listed

## **Types of security measures in detail**

### *Types of glass*

Laminated or toughened laminated glass can be susceptible to damage from a determined attack with a sharp object. However, it is very difficult to penetrate. This means that it should provide security from theft and be tough enough to withstand the impacts that might occur through unintentional damage from rowdy behaviour.

For the shopfronts of historic buildings (listed buildings and buildings in conservation areas), the use of laminated glass should always be the preferred means of improving shop security.

The thickness of this type of glass will depend on the size of sheet required. Additional thickness may make it difficult to fit this type of glass in to some traditional shop-fronts. Glass manufacturers should be able to advise you on this.

If you need to make any alterations to the shop-front to accommodate the additional thickness of laminated glass, you may need planning permission and may need listed building consent if your building is listed.

### *Alterations to glazing pattern*

Reducing the amount of glazing or dividing a shop window into smaller panes can make access into the building more difficult. It also reduces the cost if any of the panes get broken. However, dividing the windows up will only be acceptable if the resulting appearance is appropriate to the character of the building, the shopfront and the area.



*Reinstating a traditional type of shopfront gives smaller panes that are less costly to replace and the stall riser can help guard against ram raids.*

If you wish to alter the glazing pattern of your shop you are likely to need planning permission. If your building is listed you will need listed building consent.

### *Security cameras*

*Internal security cameras:* If your building is not listed, you do not need planning permission to install an internal security camera. If you wish to install an internal security camera and your building is listed, please contact a Medway Council conservation officer as listed building consent may be needed.

*External security cameras:* External security cameras can be a useful deterrent against vandalism and can be one of the less visually intrusive methods of achieving added security. However, large, poorly-sited cameras on the outside of a building can have an undesirable visual impact. Too many prominent cameras in an area can create the perception that it is unsafe, and can detract from the character of the area.



*Large unsightly camera*

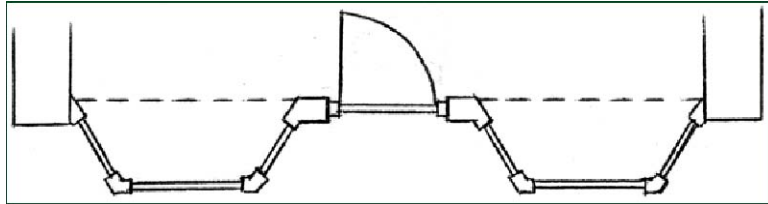
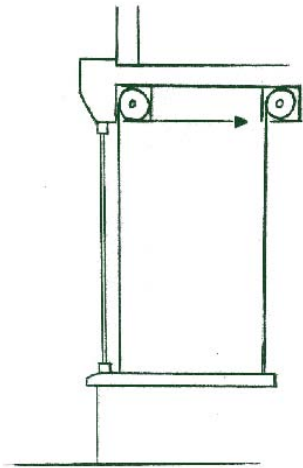


*Small discrete camera*

If you wish to install external cameras then, unless they are very small you will need planning permission. If your building is listed you will need listed building consent.

### *Internal grilles*

Internal screens and grilles can be fitted in front of or behind a windows display and can be permanent or demountable. They can be effective in stopping intruders getting into the main part of the shop. However, they do not prevent damage to the window itself.



*The grille behind this shop window would help prevent a break in but does not look very welcoming. A grille that could be removed during the day would be more desirable.*



You do not need planning permission to install an internal grille or screen. However, if your building is listed you are likely to need listed building consent.

### *External demountable shutters and grilles*



*These traditional timber shutters are lifted off the shopfront during the day. They provide a high level of security at night and look attractive. However, they create a blank frontage which it would not be desirable to replicate along the length of a high street.*

*Wooden shutters:* As a general rule Medway Council does not look favourably on the use of security measures that result in blanking-off shop windows outside opening hours. However, the use of solid wooden shutters is traditional. Well-detailed timber shutters may therefore be acceptable for listed buildings and in conservation areas if there is a demonstrable need for such added protection and if it is possible to design shutters that will not have a detrimental affect on the character of the existing shopfront.

If you wish to install wooden shutters you will need planning permission. If your building is listed you will need listed building consent.

*External Demountable Grilles:* Demountable grilles have the advantage of giving protection against vandalism and theft, as well as allowing views into the shop. However, the quality and design of these grilles can vary widely and they can create a hostile environment. Grills will only be acceptable if there is a proven need for security. In general, the Council will not allow external grilles in conservation areas.



*These external grilles could offer some discreet protection at nighttime but should be removed during the day.*

If you wish to install external demountable grilles you will need planning permission. If your building is listed you will need listed building consent.

### *Gates*

Many shopfronts have recessed doorways. These give shopfronts character and interest but can be susceptible to misuse at night. A gate can be installed that allows the recess to be shut off outside business hours. However, the Council will only allow this they fit in with the historic character of the building.

You need to apply for planning permission to install a gate. If your building is listed you will require listed building consent.

### *External roller grilles and shutters*

Roller shutters of a solid appearance, including those of a pin-hole design, and grilles, including punch lath with or without transparent infill, can have a negative impact on the character of buildings and areas. **This type of shutter will always require an application for planning permission to be made.**

If you wish to make an application for this type of security measure, full justification will be required. For an application to be considered, it must meet the following criteria:

- shop front features (i.e the fascia, stall riser and pilasters, etc) must not be covered by the grille or shutter;
- runners for the shutters must be discreetly located and match the colour of the shopfront;
- the coil housing (roller box) must be concealed behind the fascia (shop sign) or other feature;
- the shutters are punch lath and in a colour to match the shop, painted with artwork or a logo to advertise the goods within the shop (in exceptional circumstances and subject to the quality of the proposal).



*Roller shutters of a solid appearance are unsightly and not generally acceptable.*

**Roller shutters that have been installed without planning permission within the last four years are unlawful and should be removed.**

However, the Council will consider allowing their retention if:

- shutters are punch lath;
- are painted to match the colour of the shopfront with a logo or artwork advertising the shop and are of particular quality; and
- a planning application of planning permission is made for their retention.



## Justification for external solid shutters, roller shutters and roller grilles

Council policy is to discourage the use of solid shutters, roller shutters and roller grilles in all areas but especially in conservation areas and with regard to listed buildings. Planning applications for shutters and grilles are therefore likely to be refused.

Shopkeepers and building owners who wish to install external roller shutters or grilles must make a planning application, and must provide justification for the use of such security measures as a part of the application. Justification should include:

- a statement explaining the particular problem;
- a letter from the insurance company identifying previous incidents, or a letter from the police which identifies previous incidents and sets out any other measures that could be taken to protect the property; and
- an explanation of how the visual impact of the security measures will be improved.

Should you wish to receive planning advice on whether your proposal for shutters is likely to be acceptable, prior to making a planning application, the Council has a pre-application advice service. Details of this are set out within the 'Planning' section of Medway Council's web pages.



*This is an early example of a shopfront with integral timber roller shutter. Although it blanks off the shop windows the shutter does not obscure architectural detail and the roller box is hidden internally. This type of shutter may be acceptable where there is a demonstrable need for such high security.*

If you wish to install external roller shutters, you will need planning permission. If your building is listed you will need listed building consent. Unless there are special circumstances, the Council will not grant planning permission or listed building consent for external roller shutters

## **Appendix 1: Relevant local plan policies from the Medway Local Plan 2003**

### *BNE8: Security and Personal Safety*

The design and layout of development should seek to maximise personal safety and the security of property.

### *BNE9: Design of Commercial Frontages*

Proposals which would result in the loss of shop fronts of traditional design or materials, and which contribute to the character and appearance of an area, will not be permitted. Proposals for new commercial or retail frontages should:

- (i) respect the building's character, scale and appearance; and
- (ii) incorporate fascias and any additional features which are in proportion to the elevations of the existing building and which avoid obscuring any existing architectural details; and
- (i) complement the positive character of the surrounding area; and
- (ii) ensure that any security grilles or shutters demonstrated to be necessary, are designed to be an integral feature of the frontage and maintain a shop window display.

### *BNE14: Development in Conservation Areas*

Development within conservation areas, or affecting their setting should achieve a high quality of design which will preserve or enhance the area's historic or architectural character or appearance.

### *BNE17: Alterations to Listed Buildings*

Alterations, extensions, conversions or changes of use affecting a listed building will not be permitted if they are:

- (i) detrimental to the architectural or historic character of the building; or
- (ii) unsympathetic in design, scale, appearance and use; or
- (iii) do not retain original features and materials.

## **Appendix 2: Useful information**

### *Further advice on Security*

Kent Police- advice and licensing section: Website on protecting commercial premises:

<http://www.kent.police.uk/advice/advice.html>

Secured by Design: Booklet on protecting commercial premises:

[http://www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/pdfs/SBD\\_Commercial\\_2015\\_V2.pdf](http://www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/pdfs/SBD_Commercial_2015_V2.pdf)

Data protection with regard to the use of CCTV

<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/cctv/>

### *Listed buildings and conservation areas:*

Interactive amp showing listed buildings and conservation areas within Medway (NB click on 'planning' button)

<http://maps.medway.gov.uk/webmapplayersext/map.aspx>

Listed buildings: the law and our policy, Medway Council Guide

[http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/listed\\_buildings\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/listed_buildings_leaflet.pdf)

Conservation Areas: the law and our policy, Medway Council Guide

[http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/listed\\_buildings\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/listed_buildings_leaflet.pdf)

### *The Planning Application Process*

For advice on planning issues please contact the Planning Department on 01634 331700 between the hours of 9am-6pm, Monday to Friday or by e-mail at [planning.representations@medway.gov.uk](mailto:planning.representations@medway.gov.uk)

For advice on matters relating to listed buildings or buildings in a conservation area, please contact a conservation officer on 01634 331700 or by email at [design.conservation@medway.gov.uk](mailto:design.conservation@medway.gov.uk)

Medway Council's Planning Department processes applications for planning permission and listed building consent. Once an application is registered, it will be allocated to a particular planning officer who will consider it against Medway planning policies and guidance. The target time for deciding applications is eight weeks.