



AYR TOWN CENTRE

SHOPFRONT DESIGN GUIDE

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WHY SHOPFRONTS ARE IMPORTANT TO AN AREA

Shop frontages, along with their associated signage and advertising (including window displays), significantly influence the character and appearance of their surroundings. Whether this impact is positive or negative depends on how the shops are presented, and their overall visual appeal. A well designed shopfront gives a favourable perception of a business: a series of attractive shopfronts can enhance a street, encouraging more visitors and inviting them to spend longer in an area. This can benefit everyone who is part of

a town centre economy and generates an impression of civic pride. There is also a wider benefit from a shopfront that complements the buildings above and around it: shop frontages are arguably the key to whether a building is architecturally harmonious and can enhance or detract from this to a significant extent.

Poor design, low quality materials and colour schemes, intrusive lighting, excessive signage and advertising, lack of visual engagement with passers-by, and historically inappropriate styling and proportions can create a poor first impression of a shop or business and its surroundings. In a Conservation Area, these issues can detract from the unique characteristics that make the place special.

Shop frontages can be found as part of banks, restaurants and pubs, cafes, retail outlets, building societies, and even offices, and where attractive and welcoming help to draw in customers time and again.

This design guide aims to provide helpful information that can assist businesses in the improvement of their street presence. Although it does not form part of South Ayrshire Council planning policy, it may be used as guidance to assist with determining planning applications. Over time, improvement of shop frontages in line with this design guide will visibly enhance the town centre.



High Street and Wallace Tower
© Ayrshire Archives



High Street at junction with Sandgate
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AYR TOWN CENTRE

A Royal Burgh since 1205, Ayr owes its early growth and subsequent prosperity to its river and historic port. Reputedly the oldest on the west coast, the harbour saw coal and freight (along with leather, textiles, timber, wheat and oatmeal) exported from its busy banks, while imports included hemp, tallow, tar and tobacco. There was fishing, too, weaving and woollen production, but it was its position as a centre of maritime trading that saw Ayr develop, first as a medieval settlement of some distinction, and then as a county town with ambition, boasting not one but two principal streets in Sandgate and the 'L'-shaped High Street, conveniently linked to one another by Cross Street (now Newmarket Street) at the very heart of public life. There was Malt Cross,



Ayr Town Hall

Fish Cross and Meal Market, more than just evocative names; rather, vibrant places of important trading.

The original burgage plan of long, thin building plots persisted for a period (and is still to an extent discernible)

but with time came the need to widen High Street. Sandgate and New Bridge Street retained the more historic frontages (such as seen at the crowstepped Lady Cathcart's House) while High Street enjoyed a Georgian gentility. Two standout buildings in the form of the vertiginous Town Hall (1827-1832) and the Tudor Gothic Wallace Tower (1833) anchored either end of the shopping thoroughfare with aplomb. Additionally, there was an intriguing



Stained glass windows of Ayr industries in County Buildings



Tam O'Shanter Inn

thatched-roof survivor in the shape of the Tam o' Shanter Inn and the freestanding block of the Winton Buildings (1844) erected on the site from where the meal market once traded.

Much of High Street was re-developed from the Victorian period onwards, creating an eclectic architecture in a range of styles and building materials. Hourstons, Ayr's first department store, opened its doors on nearby Alloway Street in 1895, the red sandstone frontage even featuring a sundial. Trams became a feature of the streets from 1901, adding to the sense of bustle. The pends and lanes (such as Kirk Port and Nile Court) continued to act as a reminder that there was much activity in the backlands.

Unlike other towns of similar size, such as Paisley and Dumbarton, Ayr had few buildings in the Art Deco style. Burton, Marks and Spencer, and Woolworth (the latter with a striking faience façade)

rubbed shoulders at the foot of High Street (albeit none have survived). Instead, in common with many other towns, the late 20th century saw pockets of clearance and several large retail developments whose modern frontages lacked the finesse and character of their predecessors.

More recently, the buildings between the foot of High Street and the river have been progressively cleared to create a large public piazza east of which stands the timber-clad Cutty Sark Centre, opening up the north front of the Town Hall and creating an event and performance space for Ayr Town Centre. At the opposite, southern end of the shopping spine, the demolition of Ayr Station Hotel is similarly altering the views and vistas, but there is still interest in the form of a range of good Edwardian buildings and a whiff of 1930s glamour in the former Odeon Cinema – the first true Odeon Theatre ever built in Scotland.



Sundial on former Hourstons Department Store



9-15 Burns Statue Square

WHAT MAKES THE AYR TOWN CENTRE GATEWAYS SPECIAL

Ayr has historically benefited from excellent transport links with the wider west coast: it was this ease of access that ensured the success of the harbour. Now, less traffic arrives by way of water, and the two principal entry points to the centre of town are by road and rail.

Since the 1820s, after a ford across the River Ayr had been replaced by the first iteration of New Bridge, the approach from the north has been dominated by the obelisk steeple of the Town Buildings and the handsome double bow-fronted gable of the 1787 townhouse of Alexander Stevens, builder of the original bridge. Rising an elegant three-storeys-and-attic over a basement built off the riverbank, this creates the impression of a town of sophistication and ambition. This is underscored by architect Thomas Hamilton's handsome Town Buildings (the tower of which is utterly unique) and the Georgian buildings of New Bridge Street, uniformly elegant, mostly now with restored shop frontages, and creating a hearteningly intact streetscape. There is a seamless transition into Sandgate, albeit the restfulness eventually becomes disrupted by buildings from the Victorian period (which are typically more ornate) and the introduction of red sandstone in places.

On South Harbour Street, the Georgian proportions persist; there are pedimented doorpieces, regularly spaced windows and, at the western end, a bow-cornered single storey entrance pavilion with raised margins.

A long-standing issue for this north gateway was the 1930s replacement of the vennels and terraces that stretched to the riverside: Burton and Woolworth may have presented streamlined facades to High Street, but the backs did little for the waterfront. Now, following substantial demolition, the views have been opened up, and it is possible to appreciate more Georgian detailing, such as the console brackets at No. 23 and curved glass at No. 11. As High Street sweeps leisurely around to Fish Cross, there is the added interest of Old Bridge Street, the south view out of which captures a fine narrow building dating to 1777 with a gabled wallhead chimney stack and stone window margins. There are some good late-Victorian commercial buildings, including the diminutive No. 50 and its taller neighbour at No. 54 (originally the Ayr Coffee House): this has ornate balconies and deeply

1-3 New Bridge Street



Clockwise from top left:

23 High Street

18 Smith Street

Winton Buildings, 55-59 High Street

North side, Burns Statue Square

47-49 High Street



recessed windows. Opposite is the stylish sweep of the former Scottish Transit Trust Chambers at Nos. 35-39. All three betray their turn-of-the-century origins through the use of red sandstone, No. 54 built of Mauchline ashlar.

As the striking blue and cream Winton Buildings at Nos. 55-59 High Street come into view there are further good buildings in a range of styles grouped around a small town square, referred to as 'Fish Cross'. Here, built near the site of the old Tolbooth, a late 18th Century townhouse with Roman Doric doorway at No. 57; a balconied, gabled frontage at No. 61 with high level cherubs and excellent banded stonework; the former Glasgow Savings Bank with massive Aberdeen granite columns; and a much-altered older house with two pretty first floor oriels.

Travelling south, High Street eventually divides into Alloway Street and Kyle Street, neither with quite the same coherent scale as seen at New Bridge Street or Sandgate since here development is much younger. Visitors to the town were just as likely to arrive by rail as by road, and so the "Top of the Town" was laid out to include the triangular Burns Statue Square where once there had been a cattle market. The railway arrived in this fashionable town, known for its coastal views, in 1840, bringing with it tourists, day-trippers, pleasure seekers and

commuters who all contributed to the town's fortunes and future. Alighting from a train, visitors would be drawn towards the square whether en route to the beach or into town. Accordingly, the (mostly) Victorian and Edwardian buildings that provided enclosure to the square were designed with care and to create a good impression. By this point in Ayr's development the building material of choice was a warm red sandstone, which lent itself well to the stylish detailing favoured by local architects such as James A Morris, James K Hunter and J and H V Eaglesham. Together, these talented designers created the bold swagger of the former D'Auray Buildings on the corner of Dalblair Road, the offices and drill hall of the Royal Scots Fusiliers at Nos. 1-7 Burns Statue Square (beneath which survives an early tobacconist's shop), and the assured symmetry of Nos. 9-15. Alongside and to the east, Nos. 24-56 Smith Street provide a continuous curving tenement frontage with pend access to Union Arcade, shouldered chimney stacks, oriels and arched head dormers. Finally, the architect of the impressive public house of 1897 at No. 18 Smith Street is unknown, but the domed drum tower with cartouche panels and chunky keystoned windows are notable.

These standout buildings were designed to complement the architecture of the Ayr Station Hotel (also built of red sandstone) and provide a setting for the square, but there has been much loss of authenticity and subtlety at shopfront level, and while this remains an important gateway into town its character is in jeopardy.



Picture postcard Burns Statue Square

Clockwise from top left:

Georgian doorway at 57 High Street

Decorative ventilator at corner of Cathcart Street and Sandgate

Typical console bracket in stone

Mosaic 'platt' (entrance lobby) on Newmarket Street

Georgian elegance at 1-3 New Bridge Street



THE DEVELOPMENT OF AYR'S SHOP FRONTAGES

The Ayr Central Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969. In a Conservation Area, planning control is directed at maintaining the integrity of the area and taking positive action to enhance its special character. This extends to shop frontages, where every architectural period had a different style, allowing for a range of improvement solutions.

Georgian shop frontages typically have windows subdivided into smaller panes since glass technology restricted the size of individual pieces of glass. This did not mean that windows needed to be plain: Nos. 1-3 New Bridge Street has attractively decorated windows and fanlights above panelled doors. Normally in Georgian buildings, shop windows would be framed by stone pilasters in the classical tradition and (usually solid) entrance doors would be only slightly recessed. A good example of this can be seen at No. 57 High Street, looking onto Fish Cross. Also typical of Georgian buildings is the use of buff, grey or honey-coloured sandstone which was quite often painted.

During the Victorian and Edwardian periods, shopfronts were designed to catch the attention of townspeople (and tourists), and to encourage them to bank, shop, or enjoy food, drink and entertainment. Frontages typically employed larger areas of glass, and many shopkeepers increased the

Traditional shopfront detailing at 67-71 Sandgate



amount of window display space by recessing the entrance door, providing the opportunity to decorate the lobby (called a platt), sometimes with a company logo in tiles or mosaic. Sophisticated glass manufacture also allowed the installation of glazed corners, and the use of steel and cast iron (rather than stone) to support upper floors enabled large display windows, sometimes with columns expressed as a feature. The former Liberal Club at Nos. 67-71 Sandgate is a good example of an elegant Edwardian frontage with curved glass, a well-proportioned fascia, and awnings. These were once a tradition, as can be seen in picture postcards of Ayr Town Centre in its heyday.

Today, shopfronts are more varied, but the key is to respect good proportions. A minimalist shopfront can contribute positively to a streetscape if the balance of solid and void (glass) is harmonious.

Effectively restrained shopfront at 71 Newmarket Street



Good examples of this approach can be seen at The Grain Exchange at Nos. 77-81 High Street, and No. 71 Newmarket Street, where decorative detail is sparing, but proportions, colour and use of traditional materials is tastefully used. While there are few properly Art Deco frontages surviving in Ayr, these normally make use of granite and Vitrolite, and often have zig-zag decoration and splashes of bright colour.

THE COMPONENT PARTS OF A SHOPFRONT

Since shops on main shopping thoroughfares normally occupy the ground floors of taller buildings (quite often, tenements), there is usually a strong horizontal subdivision between the retail unit and the floors up above. This is typically expressed in the form of a **fascia**, which might have some decoration above (called a **cornice**) and brackets at either end (called **console brackets**). The console brackets often

correspond to a vertical feature called a **pilaster** (effectively a column). **Fascias** are important since it is here that lettering and branding can be displayed: they are high enough to be visible from a distance. Traditional shopfront **fascias** are mostly timber, and often the **fascia** will incorporate an **awning**, or sunblind, to protect the goods on display from sunlight and shoppers outside from inclement weather.

There will be an entrance door, sometimes with a **fanlight** (often designed to be openable for ventilation). These are normally recessed but can be flush, such as designed during the Georgian era. Where set back from the frontage, there are sometimes attractive lobbies that are decorative. The windows next to an entrance door provide display areas: following the invention of plate glass in the 1830s, these tended to become larger and with fewer subdivisions, allowing for a greater opportunity for promotion of goods and services (not to mention more daylight



to the shop interior). Below the windows would be a **stallriser** – the area between the window cill and pavement – which would protect the glass from damage and raise the display up to a comfortable level. **Stallrisers** were normally finished in stone, brick and render, tiles (sometimes granite) or even glass prism lights if there was a basement below.

THE DESIGN OF NEW SHOPFRONTS

A successful shopfront improvement will relate to the scale, proportions, materials and character of the parent building, as well as adjacent buildings and other features of the area, and ideally will secure the preservation or reinstatement of traditional detailing and architectural features, which helps tell the story of a building and can create a talking point. During shopfront improvement works, any historic features that are unveiled, including evidence of former businesses that traded from the same location, should be preserved if at all possible, or at least properly recorded for posterity. So-called “ghost signs” that sometimes appear on gables and above pends can be interesting since they tell a story about the site.

HISTORIC RESEARCH

Ayrshire Archives has a collection of photographs of the town through the ages, and there are images available online that can provide a good starting point for the design of a new shopfront in keeping with the area ([Ayrshire Archives](#)). The local shelves in Waterstones are also a valuable resource! Too often, shop frontages

have been altered with over-sized fascias, unattractive signage and corporate branding: archive drawings and photographs can provide clues as to the original design and materials.

FASCIAS & STALLRISERS

Quality and variety are welcomed, but a degree of uniformity may be needed where adjoining shops are part of a larger building: the curved frontage of Nos. 24-56 Smith Street was designed to have a range of ground floor shops that would have had similar proportions and consistent architectural details. The design of fascias and stallrisers is important in this respect since these features form strong horizontal lines: fascias should be as close to the original historic dimensions as possible and can be slightly sloping outwards as well as flat. Sometimes an original fascia is found beneath modern panels, and this should be restored as far as possible. Fascias should not overlap adjoining properties, and where there are console brackets these should be retained or replicated. Similarly, stallrisers should be retained or reinstated where appropriate and no greater than 600mm in height. Stallrisers can be finished in a range of materials, but these should be hardwearing, easily cleaned and complement other materials used on the shopfront. Decorative vents in stall

‘Ghost’ sign, Nile Court



risers can introduce fresh air at solum level. Some Georgian buildings have attractive stallriser details (such as seen at the corner of Cathcart Street and Sandgate) and these should be preserved.

Often fascias have decoration in the form of a cornice, or little timbers called dentil blocks. Where possible these should be retained or reinstated. Traditionally, fascias provided the principal opportunity for advertising, and many were artworks in themselves. There are websites devoted to historic signage that has been uncovered beneath modern coverings.

SIGNAGE, LIGHTING & AWNINGS

New signage, if directly mounted onto a fascia, should be confined to the depth and length of the fascia and limited to trade names and product information. It should not stick out as a box fixed to the fascia. Alternatively, individual raised letters in timber or appropriate metals can be effective since they create a dynamic, three-dimensional look. Traditional professional signwriting can also be impactful, as well as period-appropriate designs. Overtly modern fonts or excessively large lettering

will not be considered appropriate. A well-designed and lettered fascia speaks volumes about the quality of the business at that address and can be an effective promotional tool.

Lighting of shopfronts can be achieved in a number of ways, with traditional overhanging lights acceptable provided there is historic precedent, and the materials used will not tarnish or discolour. Illuminated boxes with lettering are discouraged, but slimline LED lighting may be considered. Lighting schemes are expected to enhance the “after dark” experience and help promote a safe environment, but fluorescent tubes in window display areas do not create the variety and interest that an attractive shopfront should have, and alternatives should be considered.

Projecting signs can also be found on historic buildings, but these are less common nowadays, and where proposed should be based on historic precedent. Finishes should be durable and the signs sufficiently high off the pavement and back from the roadway that they will not cause an obstruction. They must be robustly secured to the building frontage.



Three examples of effective traditional signage

© Mark Greaves

Similarly, traditional retractable awnings and blinds can be designed as an integral part of a shopfront but must be made of a durable material such as canvas and should not project further than 2.0 metres from the building frontage or be closer to the pavement than 2.5 metres in height. Fixed rigid canopies are discouraged, and retractable awnings should have recessed boxes below fascia level, which is traditional. There are a number of products on the market, including those that have old-style zig-zag arms: most can be manually operated using a simple pole.

Modern interiors often incorporate lowered ceilings, and where these cannot be avoided (for instance, where there are hidden services), they can be adjusted to slope back from the glazing of the shop windows, or alternatively a clerestory can be created to hide the ceiling. This is a horizontal subdivision at the head of a display window that contains opaque or coloured glass.

Entrances that are recessed, and curved or angled windows are encouraged, but doors should be clearly defined and designed with care.

SECURITY & SHUTTERS

It is appreciated that large display windows require out-of-hours protection, but solid security shutters will be resisted since they create an unappealing environment while shops are closed. Open lattice shutters or grilles (along with toughened or laminated glass) allow for window shopping out-of-hours and

help enliven a streetscape. Doors can be protected by decorative metal gates or open lattice shutters (there should be provision allowed for postal deliveries). Where shutters are installed, the shutter box should be concealed behind the fascia and have the guide rails recessed into the pilasters or framing. Shutters should be coloured to match or contrast with the main shopfront colour scheme and any electronic controls should be recessed into the shopfront frame.

It is recognised that multiple retailers have a house style, and that these will form an essential part of the design of the shopfront. That said, South Ayrshire Council will resist a standard solution being imposed if this produces a shopfront that is of low quality, is historically inappropriate, or uninteresting.

Street numbers should be incorporated into signage: this assists with deliveries and wayfinding.

Internal shutters on New Bridge Street



ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY

Accessibility is important in attracting customers from all walks of life. Entrance doors should be wide enough for wheelchair users and shoppers with walking aids, buggies and prams. Entrances should be level wherever possible, and door ironmongery easily visible and compliant. Large areas of window glass can be confusing: where there is the possibility of impact, there should be manifestations (markings) to prevent this and the glazing should be strong enough to withstand impact. New shopfronts should comply with the legislation set out in the Scottish Building Standards Non-Domestic Technical Handbook (April 2024 Edition).

Care should be taken when dismantling existing shop frontages to have an asbestos inspection carried out in advance, and care should be taken when cleaning or scraping off paint since historic paint products may contain lead.

Well-proportioned shop front in Girvan



MATERIALS FOR NEW SHOPFRONTS

Materials should be chosen for their durability and appropriateness to the location: these may be different depending on the age of the main building but should not be plastic. Timber is encouraged (where historically correct) but all wood should come from a sustainable source. Galvanized steel and untreated aluminium are not encouraged. Professional preparation and decoration of all timber surfaces is important and will improve the longevity of the work. Varnish does not successfully disguise different types of timber and should only be used where the timber is consistent across all parts of the shopfront and ideally hardwood. There may be leaded or prismatic glass as part of the shopfront (such as at No. 68 Fort Street), and this should be repaired by a conservator if damaged.

New painting of existing stonework is not recommended, and removal of paint from stone should be carried out by a specialist stonemasonry company. Samples of paint removal must always be tested on an inconspicuous area in advance, and approval sought from South Ayrshire Council.

The most cost effective and sustainable way to improve a shopfront is to repair materials that have years of life left. Existing door and window frames can be repaired rather than renewed, new glazing can be installed in existing frames, and colour schemes can be refreshed, and signage updated. Wherever possible, materials should be re-cycled or up-cycled. Historic features should be celebrated!

THE IMPORTANCE OF COLOUR

Different periods in architecture made use of colour in different ways, and it is important to respect this. Georgian builders had access to limited colour palettes that were typically subtle and muted (such as seen on New Bridge Street), while Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts tended to be more vibrant. Many paint manufacturers offer “heritage” colours, and dark tones often work better than light shades. White is not appropriate (nor is it easy to keep clean) whereas black, used correctly, can be smart.

It is important to recognise that the parent colour of the building should be considered when choosing a shopfront colour. Buff sandstone looks well against soft Georgian colours as well as brighter heritage colours: it is harder to avoid a clash with red sandstone buildings, but when there is uniformity across the whole building, such as seen on the upper floors of Wellington Chambers on Fort Street, the effect is striking.

Where there are vestiges of an old shopfront, careful paint scrapes will reveal the original colour, which can then be matched using a paint swatch.



Vibrant use of colour on a Renfrewshire shop
© Vivien Thomson



Good use of colour on a Dunbartonshire shop
© Laura Scott-Simmons

STATUTORY CONSENTS

There are several permissions that may be required to alter a shopfront, and South Ayrshire Council’s Planning Department will be able to advise on the procedures to be followed. **Planning Permission** will be required for any alteration to a shopfront that changes the character or external appearance of the building. Examples of these are altering fascias, adding blinds, awnings or shutters, or changing doors, display windows or colours. There are several “listed” buildings in Ayr’s Town Centre that are of architectural or historic merit, and any external or internal changes to a shopfront on a listed building will require **Listed Building Consent** (on which Historic Environment Scotland may be

consulted). Since Ayr Town Centre is a Conservation Area, high standards of design and materials will be required to any shopfront within the CA: additionally, **Conservation Area Consent** may be required. Every application will be dealt with on its own merits. Illuminated signs require permission.

A **Building Warrant** may be required to ensure that any alterations are structurally sound and in accordance with the Scottish Building Standards Non-Domestic Technical Handbook (April 2024 Edition) in respect of safety, accessibility and sustainability. Additionally, **Advertising Consent** may be needed for the erection or replacement of advertisements and signs.

To make any of these applications to South Ayrshire Council, accurate “before and after” drawings in plan and elevation (as well as photographs) will be needed. Assistance in the preparation of these can be given by a chartered architect or

building surveyor. The permissions must be in place before any construction work begins.

During construction work, it may be necessary to erect protective hoardings (or similar) and use a skip to dispose of debris and construction materials as work progresses. Encroaching on a pavement, even for a short time, or placing a skip on a road, requires permission from South Ayrshire Council. The builder or shopfitter should be able to organise these permits.

South Ayrshire Council can advise on any other restrictions that may be imposed during the construction or shop-fitting process, including storage of materials, disposal of rubbish and debris, control of noise and vibration, protection of pavements and roadways, working hours, and liaison with neighbours. It is important that neighbours, whether commercial or residential, are not disturbed by shopfitting work.



The sweeping north side of Burns Statue Square

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Astragal

A glazing bar.

Awning

A canvas blind on metal telescopic arms that can be pulled out to protect goods in windows from sunlight, and passers-by from rain. A good surviving example can be found at No. 60 Sandgate.

Bow front

A type of curving bay window. See Nos. 1-3 New Bridge Street (facing the river).

Cartouche Panel

A carved panel, usually within a decorative frame. See No. 18 Smith Street (on the tower, at high level, including a datestone).

Column

A vertical structural element that is usually circular on plan and of plain or decorated design. Columns typically carry an entablature (fascia) or a lintel. See the former Glasgow Savings Bank (TSB) at No. 65 High Street where the columns are black granite.

Console bracket

These are normally used to mark the termination of one shop and the beginning of another and often resemble scrolls. These have their origins in classical brackets or corbels and are normally located at the end of the fascia. They may be highly decorative using classical inspiration or of a stylised design. See Pollok Williamson Butchers at No. 23

High Street. Very decorative console brackets at Nos. 30-38 Newmarket Street (William Wallace and Robert the Bruce).

Cornice

In classical architecture terms this is the upper half of the "entablature" and in shopfront terms it is usually the top section of the fascia. It normally marks the division between the shopfront and the building above it. It can be made of timber or stone.

Dentil

This is a small protruding block of stone or timber that is part of a horizontal pattern located below the cornice. Dentil blocks are often found in late 19th century shopfronts. See Robbie's Drums Whisky Merchants at No. 3 Sandgate where the dentils are picked out in a contrasting colour.

Dormer

A window that projects from a sloping roof.

Edwardian

A period in architecture from 1901 to 1910.

Entablature

Originally, the upper part of a classical building, but in shopfront terms, usually the fascia with cornice on top, and often dentil blocks below, all supported off columns or a supporting framework.

Faience

This is a type of terracotta that comes in a variety of glazed finishes and sizes. Quite often used in the construction of shopfronts and popular as a facing for buildings in the 1930s.

Fanlight

This is a glazed light situated above a door and is often square or rectangular in shape. Fanlight glass may be plain or decorative (or stained) and may have glazing bars (known as astragals) of varying designs. Late 18th century shops tend to have narrow rectangular fanlights, but fanlights became larger during the 19th century as shops became taller. Some fanlights are bottom hinged so that they open inwards for ventilation (these are called “hoppers”). Good examples at Nos. 1-3 High Street, and No. 57 High Street. Fanlights often display street numerals.

Fascia

In classical architecture terms this would be a frieze but was simplified for use in shopfronts. Originally narrow, during the 19th century they were deepened to reflect an increasing use of the fascia board for lettering. Usually constructed of timber, fascias may be flat or sloping and provide an opportunity for colour and signwriting.

Georgian

A period in architecture from 1714 to 1837.

Keystone

Wedge-shaped stone at the apex of an arch. The keystone at Nos. 30-38 Newmarket Street is recognisably John Knox.

Leaded glass

Glass formed in small, often coloured panes, set within a supporting framework of thin strips of lead. See No. 68 Fort Street.

Lobby

This is a small, recessed area at the front of a shop leading to a shop door. It is sometimes protected by a gate and the floor can be plain concrete, tiled, terrazzo or marble. There is a pretty “platt” (lobby floor) on Newmarket Street.

Mosaic

This is a decorative ceramic made up of small tiles laid in mortar to form a pattern (see ‘lobby’ above). Mosaic was popular during the Edwardian period for lobby floors.

Oriel

A projecting bay window that does not reach ground level.



Birds eye view of Burns Statue Square in its heyday
© Ayrshire Archives

Pilaster

This is a column with a shaft and a base that projects slightly from the wall but isn't structural in nature. Used in shopfront design from the 1850s onwards. May be decorated or plain.

Roman Doric

One of the classical "orders" of architecture and relatively simple in appearance. See the columns at No. 57 High Street.

Shopfitter

A specialised type of tradesman sometimes having originally been a joiner who fits both shop frontages and shop interiors.



Former New Bridge and Steeple
© Ayrshire Archives

Shutters

A security feature for the protection of goods and valuable glass. During the 18th century wooden boards were used - they were lifted in and out of the shop and placed into special grooves or slots and fixed with an iron bar. Roller shutters were introduced in the 19th century and metal roller shutters are now popular with shopkeepers although while they are perceived as offering a higher degree of security, they can be visually intrusive, particularly when used on a traditional shopfront.

Stall riser

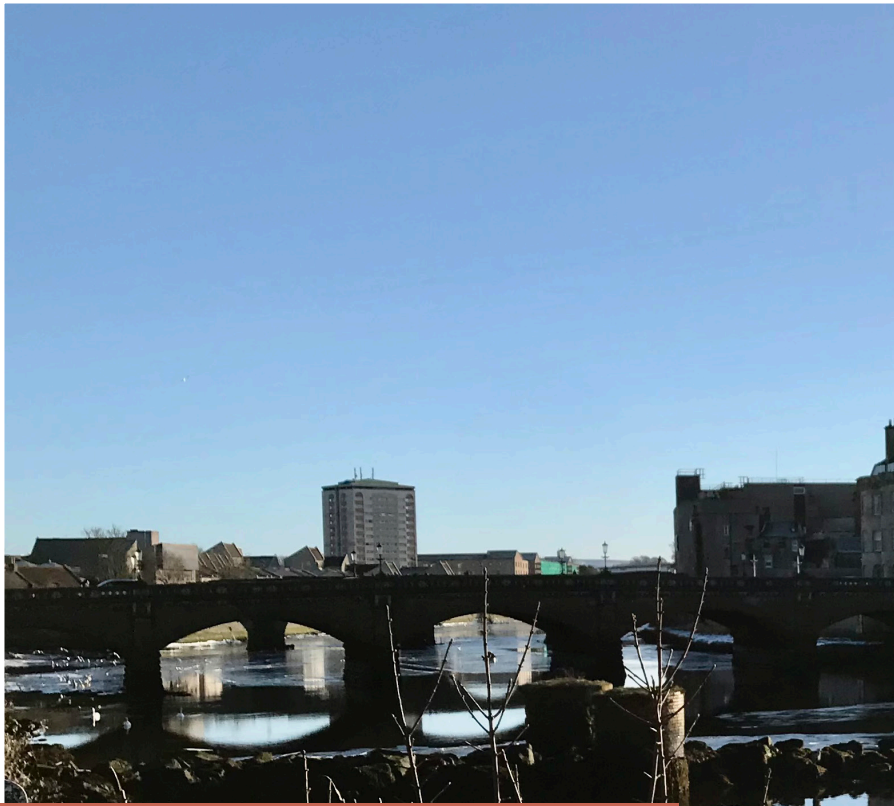
The vertical area between the window cill and the ground level which is usually made of brick, stone or timber. It may be plain or decorated with tiles, ironwork or stone or marble cladding. There are pretty ventilating stall risers at the corner of Sandgate and Cathcart Street (as well as some good "dentil" blocks under the fascia).

Ventilator

A horizontal band at the window head which is used to allow ventilation into a shop. These were popular for fresh food shops which required higher levels of fresh air.

Victorian

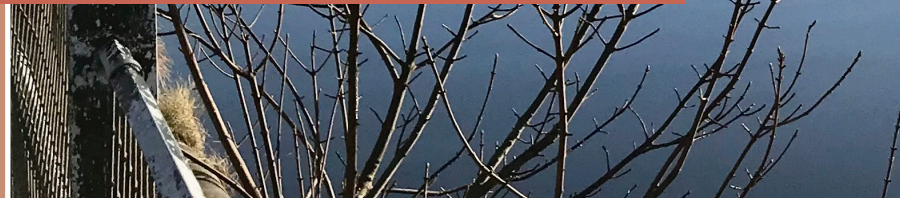
A period in architecture that coincided with the reign of Queen Victoria between 1837 and 1901. Typically more elaborate than Georgian.



<https://rias.org.uk/>

<https://www.trustedtrader.scot/SouthAyrshire/>

Search for a Listed Building | Historic Environment Scotland



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