

9. SHOPPING

9.1 INTRODUCTION

- 9.1.1 Shops and their availability, together with the range of goods available in an area are an important part of people's lives. Retailing is undergoing a continuous process of change. This has been especially marked over recent years. There has been an increasing growth in demands for out of centre shopping facilities throughout the country.
- 9.1.2 The Ribble Valley, with its main centres of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley has escaped much of the pressure for major superstore and retail park development. These pressures do however exist in the Borough and it is important for this plan to establish Council policy on how any such proposal would be determined.
- 9.1.3 Surveys have shown that vacancy rates in Clitheroe have remained relatively low over the period since 1986. This is despite a difficult economic climate in the early 1990's. In addition to this the standard of shopping facilities in the town has improved over this period. Despite these improvements Clitheroe has fallen from 17th to 20th in a ranking of all shopping centres in Lancashire.
- 9.1.4 The development of a traditional Lancashire style market on the former auction mart site will hopefully help to redress this balance and bring more trade to the town.
- 9.1.5 Elsewhere, vacancy rates are also low with only 3% in Longridge and 4.5% in Whalley being empty at the time of the survey. The condition of shops was also very good in these areas.
- 9.1.6 In the more rural parts of the Borough the main concerns have related to the loss of village shops. This is despite the fact that a net increase in applications for shops has taken place in the rural parts of the Borough over recent years. The main change has, however, been the type of shops proposed with the majority of new facilities being for craft or antique shops.
- 9.1.7 Shopping policies in this plan are divided along the same lines as the settlement strategy. As such different policies will apply in areas such as Clitheroe and the Rural Villages.

9.2 POLICIES APPLIED IN CLITHEROE

9.2.1 **POLICY S1**

Proposals for small or large scale shopping developments within the main shopping centre of Clitheroe will be approved subject to the other policies of this Plan and Policy GI in particular. Special regard will be had to the likely contribution of proposals to the vitality and viability of the centre and their effect on the character and appearance of the area as well as the arrangements for vehicular movement and parking. The main shopping centre is defined on the Proposals Map.

- 9.2.2 The Lancashire Structure Plan identifies Clitheroe as a shopping centre which is suitable for major retail development. It is the only part of the Borough which is considered capable of accommodating such development.
- 9.2.3 For the purposes of this policy, large scale developments are considered to be those intended to serve a wide catchment area (i.e. wider than Clitheroe and its surrounding area).
- 9.2.4 Proposals which fall into this category include large supermarkets and hypermarkets, retail warehouses and comprehensive redevelopments comprising a number of smaller units.
- 9.2.5 Any proposal must conform to the other policies of this plan, particularly the general policies and parking/highways policies.

9.2.6 POLICY S2

Proposals for shopping development outside the main shopping centre, as defined on the Proposals Map, will be considered on a sequential basis. Development of sites on the edge of the centre will be allowed, provided:

- (a) the development could not reasonably be undertaken on a site within the defined main shopping centre;**
- (b) the site is close enough to the town centre to be readily accessible by foot;**
- (c) the site is accessible by means of public transport;**
- (d) the proposal would not seriously affect the vitality or viability of the town centre;**
- (e) the proposal would contribute towards meeting local shopping needs; and**
- (f) the proposal conforms to the other policies of the Plan, with particular regard to environmental impact and arrangements for vehicular movement and parking.**

Only if no suitable edge-of-centre sites are available will shopping development on out-of-centre sites be allowed, and these will be subject to criteria (a) and (c)-(f).

- 9.2.7 This policy would allow large scale development in Clitheroe, which is separate from the existing main shopping area. It is a reflection of the fact that there may be sites where this type of development will not cause major problems.
- 9.2.8 Any proposal will be expected to conform to the other policies of this plan, particularly the general policies and parking/highway policies.
- 9.2.9 This policy is in conformity with Government guidance on the subject of Town centres and retail developments as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 6 "Town Centres and Retail Development". In applying criteria it is considered that "readily accessible by foot" would normally be a distance between 200 to 300 metres but this would vary according to local topography and other local features e.g. strength and attraction of the town centre, location of car parks.

9.2.10 POLICY S3

Within the principal shopping frontage of Clitheroe, as defined on the Proposals Map, the only new uses considered appropriate at ground floor level will be uses included in Class A1 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and use for the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises other than in exceptional circumstances where there would be no material adverse effect to the character of the frontage, general amenity or highway safety.

- 9.2.11 The character, attractiveness and vitality of the town centre can suffer as a result of the loss of shopping facilities. Market Place, Castle Street and Castlegate together with the northern section of Moor Lane are the principal shopping streets in the town. The introduction of non-retail uses, such as banks, building societies, estate agents etc, creates breaks in shopping frontages and forces retail uses to secondary streets. This weakens the quality of the principal shopping streets and threatens the vitality of the town.
- 9.2.12 This policy allows the change of use of properties to cafes and restaurants subject to the provisions of Policy G1 of this plan, however, the sale of take-away foods is restricted.
- 9.2.13 This policy is linked to a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988, which restricts permitted development rights for changes of use from Use Class A3 (Food and Drink) to Use Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services) and also restricts Use Class A3 to the sale of food or drink for consumption on the premises. This means that planning consent must be obtained for such development.

9.3 **POLICIES TO BE APPLIED IN LONGRIDGE AND WHALLEY**

9.3.1 **POLICY S4**

Proposals for new small scale shopping developments will be approved on sites which are physically closely related to existing shopping facilities. All proposed shopping developments will be subject to other relevant policies of the Plan and the Borough Council will have particular regard to the effect of proposals on the character and amenities of the centre and the consequences in respect of vehicular movement and parking. Policy S5 will be applied to proposals for local shops.

9.3.2 Longridge and Whalley are the other main shopping areas of the Borough. Their size and facilities are more closely related to local shopping needs than those of Clitheroe. For the purposes of this policy small scale shopping development is considered to be of a size intended to serve the needs of the local settlement and its immediately surrounding area rather than a wider car based clientele. The gross floorspace of such a development should not normally exceed 1,500m².

9.3.3 Major retail developments would be out of keeping in these areas and will not normally be permitted.

9.4 **POLICIES TO BE APPLIED IN OTHER DEFINED SETTLEMENTS**

9.4.1 **POLICY S5**

Applications for the provision of shops serving a local need will be permitted. Applications must conform to the other policies of this plan and in particular:

- i) should not harm the residential amenities of the area;**
- ii) should provide adequate safe parking provision;**
- iii) should incorporate suitably designed shop fronts which reflect the character of the area.**

9.4.2 Local village shops of this type often help to meet the community need for "close at hand" facilities. In addition they often trade outside of normal trading hours.

9.4.3 In determining applications the council will have regard to the residential amenities of the area, design of shop fronts etc, and parking provision.

9.4.4 **POLICY S6**

The change of use of ground floor commercial premises to residential accommodation within the village boundaries will be approved providing it has been demonstrated that the change of use will not lead to adverse effects on the local rural economy.

9.4.5 The loss of retail uses or other community related commercial premises to residential use in village can have a serious detrimental effect on the economic and social well-being of the local rural areas served. This is particularly important where a nucleus of commercial properties has been established, for example with good parking, access and delivery facilities. The loss of such units may lead to demand elsewhere on less suitable sites.

9...6 In assessing any application the Council will require the applicant to provide information to demonstrate there is no demand to retain the premises in commercial use. The property will be expected to have been offered for sale on the open market for a period of at least 12 months at a realistic price (confirmed by the Council's Estates Section). Information on all

offers made, together with copies of the sale particulars will also be required to accompany the application.

9.5 FARM SHOPS

9.5.1 POLICY S7

The Borough Council will approve the development of farm shops which are linked to genuine farm diversification proposals, subject to the following criteria:

- (i) Any new building should be minimal, well related to existing farm buildings and reflect the landscape character of the area in terms of materials and design.**
- (ii) The proposal should be well related to the primary transport route system. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance.**
- (iii) The site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas.**
- (iv) The range of goods sold must be linked to the farming nature of the enterprise.**
- (v) Where possible the proposal should incorporate the use of existing farm buildings.**

These should:

- (a) have a genuine history of use for agriculture or other rural enterprise;**
- (b) be structurally sound and capable of conversion for the proposed use without the need for major alterations which would adversely affect the character of the building;**
- (vi) The proposed use will not cause unacceptable disturbance to neighbours in any way.**

9.5.2 Farm shops can have a number of beneficial effects. They can introduce a service into rural areas where village shops may be few and far between. They can help regenerate disused buildings. They provide an attraction for visitors to the area. At the same time they can help to make a marginal farming enterprise more viable. In considering such proposals the desirability for the farmer of providing a service throughout the year and the potential impact on nearby village shops will be taken into account.

9.5.3 It is normally assumed that the use of farm shop only for the sale of goods produced on that farm is a use which is ancillary to use as a farm and therefore does not require the benefit of planning permission, whereas use as a farm shop selling a significant amount of "important" produce is a separate use and subject to planning control.

9.5.4 In considering applications for this type of development, which is contrary to the normal settlement strategy, the council will encourage the preparation of a farm plan.

9.5.5 A farm plan is a supporting document to a planning application for a farm diversification scheme which provides additional information to a local planning authority to enable them to understand fully the reasons for the scheme and to judge the implications of it.

9.5.6 A full description of farm plans is given in Section 6.9.

9.5.7 The conversion of buildings to uses which would allow the maintenance of employment opportunities is generally to be encouraged and only where clear disturbance will be caused to neighbours where the form of the building will be wholly inappropriate where development control criteria cannot be met or where the proposed use is contrary to other policies in this plan, will such proposals be resisted.

9.5.8 The policy acknowledges the importance of design quality of the rural environment generally. Barns form an important part of local landscape and their value can be damaged if a conversion leads to an appearance of "urbanization in an otherwise wholly rural view". Design guidance provided in Section 5.13.19 of this plan is equally relevant to conversions for retail use.

9.6 GARDEN CENTRES

9.6.1 POLICY S8

Proposals for the development of garden centres on land outside the main settlement boundaries will be approved subject to the following criteria:

- (i) the proposal conforms to policy GI of this plan;**
- (ii) the site must not be within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or the green belt;**
- (iii) the site must be physically well related to a defined settlement;**
- (iv) the development should not undermine the character, quality or visual amenities of the plan area by virtue of its scale, materials or design;**
- (v) the proposal should be well related to the public transport system. It should not generate additional traffic movements of a scale and type likely to cause undue problems or disturbance;**
- (vi) the site should be large enough to accommodate the necessary car parking, service areas and appropriate landscaped areas.**

9.6.2 For the purposes of this plan garden centres are defined as a business for the retailing of horticultural produce and ancillary goods where the majority of the produce is brought in for sale. Garden centre development should fit comfortably into the landscape of the area in which it is located. Such development is not appropriate in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty because of the associated features such as car parking areas and sales buildings etc.

9.6.3 The proposal should not create traffic problems for local people or visitors to the area.

9.6.4 In cases where proposals for garden centres are allowed, the council will normally grant consent subject to the satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement. This will be aimed at ensuring that the site continues to be operated as a garden centre and no other retail uses.

9.7 UPPER FLOOR USES

9.7.1 POLICY S9

The Borough Council will permit the beneficial use of under-used upper floors of buildings within the town centres for purposes compatible with their principal use, and also that of the adjoining properties. The uses encouraged will be principally commercial, office or residential.

9.7.2 The beneficial use of upper floors of buildings in the town centre can bring many advantages. These include the satisfaction of demand for small scale office accommodation, thus helping to assist in the broadening of employment opportunities available to the town's population. The re-use of upper floors will also help to satisfy demand for residential flats (particularly to let) and help to revitalise the town centre, maintaining activity in the evenings. It has been shown elsewhere that security of premises is assisted where beneficial use is made of town centre properties. Successful use of upper floors also helps to generate extra income, and as such increases the financial margins available for repair and maintenance of properties, thus improving the appearance of the town centre. Finally in the case of residential developments additions to the overall stock of housing can cumulatively help to reduce the pressure to find and re-develop green-field sites elsewhere.

9.7.3 The provision of adequate access facilities for disabled people should be an important consideration in all proposals.

9.8 **HOT FOOD TAKE-AWAYS**

9.8.1 **POLICY S10**

Planning permission for the development or change of use of premises to hot food take-away shops will be granted subject to the following criteria.

- (i) **The proposed development does not conflict with other policies of this plan.**
- (ii) **Hours of operation should not cause harm to any residential amenity.**
- (iii) **The emission of odours is controlled by the provision of fume extractors.** (iv)
The provision of waste bins.
- (v) **Car parking and servicing provision.**

Planning permission for the sale of hot food goods within residential areas or where on-street parking is likely to cause unacceptable highway problems will not normally be granted.

9.8.2 Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes Order) 1987, the siting of hot food take-aways can result in amenity problems, particularly relating to the hours of business operation and potential disturbance to residents as a result of the coming and going of customers and their cars, on-street parking and congestion, the emission and treatment of smells from the use itself and the careless disposal of litter.

9.8.3 Where practicable fume ducting should be carried out internally with a ridge or chimney top termination; prior to any proposals being submitted applicants are advised to consult with the Environmental Services Department.

9.8.4 Details of fume extraction will be required when the application is submitted. The Local Planning Authority will control the hours of operation by condition. This policy seeks to mitigate against the environmental problems associated with hot food take-aways and will be implemented through the development control process, and following the advice set out in Circular 13/87.

9.8.5 It is emphasised that planning is only one of a number of control functions, exercised by the Borough Council, and that the grant of planning permission does not imply Building Control approval or an authorisation required under Environmental Health or Pollution Control Legislation.

9.9 **TEMPORARY RETAILING**

9.9.1 **POLICY S11**

Planning permission for temporary retailing including markets and car boot sales will not be granted.

In exceptional circumstances proposals will be considered where it can be shown that the proposal does not result in:

- 1. a detrimental effect on the vitality or viability of established shopping facilities; or**
- 2. a detrimental effect on residential or visual amenity; or**
- 3. a detrimental effect on a conservation area, a listed building, the AONB or other site of acknowledged importance; or**
- 4. significant highway or environmental problems.**

9.9.2 Where such proposals constitute development requiring planning permission, control will be exercised in the interests of residential amenity, the free flow of traffic and highway safety, the local economy, conservation and townscape issues of acknowledged importance. It is recognised that where such uses occur frequently they can have a detrimental effect on existing shopping facilities, and should not normally be granted.

9.9.3 Implementation of this policy will be through the development control process.

9.10 **FACTORY SHOPS**

9.10.1 **POLICY S12**

The development of ancillary retail facilities within existing non-retail premises will be allowed, provided that:

- (i) The products are manufactured and sold from the same premises.**
- (ii) The retail element can be accommodated without an adverse effect on existing servicing and car parking arrangements or that additional appropriate requirements can be provided.**
- (iii) The proposal is unlikely to lead to significant loss of amenity to residents in the immediate locality by reason of noise or disturbance.**

9.10.2 There are a number of manufacturing premises within the Borough which may benefit from the opportunity to open factory shops. This policy sets out the circumstances in which the Council would be likely to approve such retail use in areas which are outside traditional shopping centres.

9.11 **SHOP FRONT DESIGN**

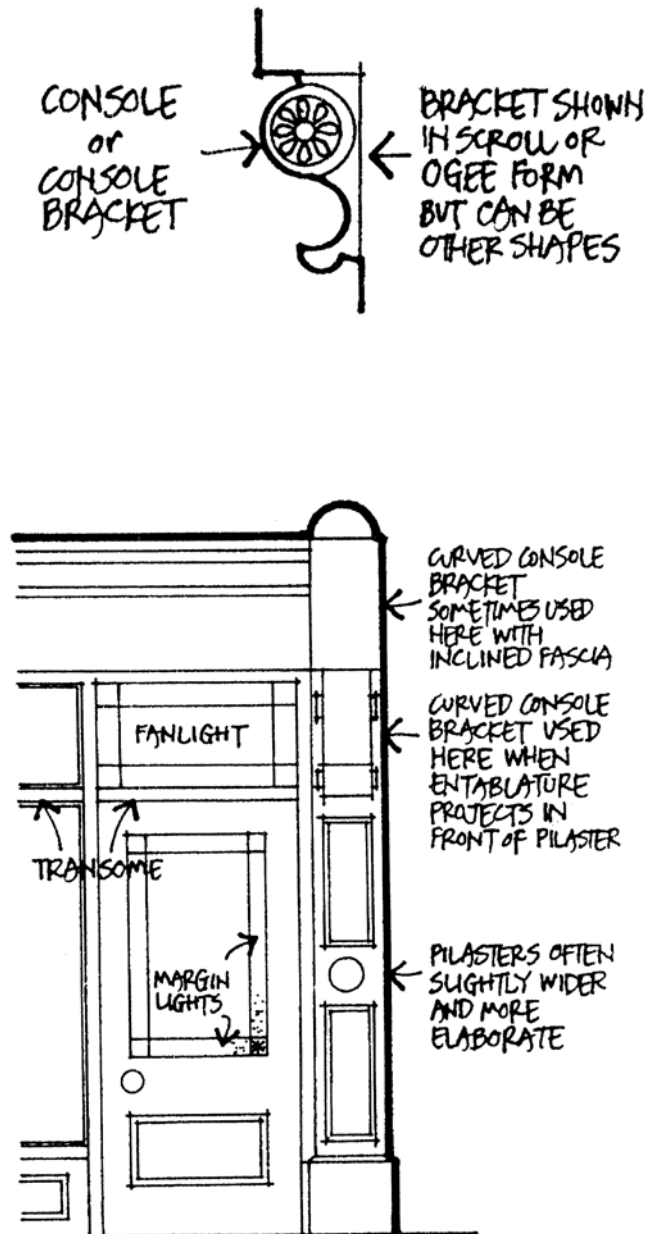
9.11.1 **POLICY S13**

The Borough Council will require new shop fronts to be designed to be in keeping with the character of the building and appropriate in the street scene.

9.11.2 The poor design of a shop front can have a detrimental effect on both the building and the street scene. Encouragement will be given to the improvement of existing shop fronts.

9.11.3 It is not intended that every new shop front should look exactly the same. The following section provides guidelines to ensure that any new provision does not detract dramatically from the existing character. Figure 5 gives an illustration of the main traditional features. Any existing additional shop fronts which are "listed" should remain intact and be repaired rather than replaced.

Figure 5 - Main traditional shop front features.



- 9.11.4 In considering the design of an existing or new shop front, the requirements of the shopkeeper are, of course, of vital importance. There is a need to advertise the business and display the goods for sale, and in today's climate the need to have adequate security is also regrettably becoming more and more paramount.
- 9.11.5 Though the individual may wish to announce the presence of a particular shop, there is also a general need for the design to be sympathetic to the rest of the street. If unsympathetic alterations are repeated, the general attractiveness of the street is reduced to resemble any other shopping street. There is ample proof that people will visit places which have a traditional appeal but this is not to say that a modern shop front cannot offer traditional design features. If traditional designs are considered as a basis, sufficient freedom exists for the individuality and free expression of shop owners and designers to exploit. Points to note include:

❖ UPPER FLOORS

The upper floors above shops are very important. This also includes the roof with its associated detailing, ie chimneys, ridge tiles, finials etc. This is particularly important where the upper floors are modernised, and window frames can be in a poor state of repair. Original windows should be repaired wherever possible and if it is not possible to repair, authentic copies should be made. Particular attention should be paid to detail, for example the thickness of glazing bars as inappropriate detail can seriously harm the visual appeal of a building.

❖ TRADITIONAL WINDOW DESIGN FEATURES

The typical traditional window, constructed of timber usually has an ornamental surround, a cornice, dentils, angled fascia, panelled side pilasters surrounded by carved (corbelled), panelled stallriser beneath the window. This is often seen together with a recessed doorway and ornamental glazing bars. The angled fascia above the window directs its message downwards to the onlooker, the stallriser raises the display to a convenient level for inspection and protects the base of the window from damage. The whole is a subtly contrived design aimed at holding the eye within a strong frame, discouraging any escape other than to the recessed door, with its intention to enter. In relation to this, the following should be observed:

- (a) Display windows and their surrounds should be designed to reflect the existing architectural features of the building facades to which they are applied.
- (b) Stallrisers should be retained or replaced where they have been previously removed, as they provide a visual base to the shop front.
- (c) The importance of a house style or corporate image to some traders is recognised but the importance of visual amenity is considered more important. House styles will, therefore, be required to be sympathetically adapted to particular buildings in conservation areas and other locations.

9.12 **ADVERTISEMENTS**

9.12.1 **POLICY S14**

Renewals of consent and new consent to display and advertisement on shop fronts will be granted if the proposal is acceptable in terms of amenity and public safety, having regard to the following criteria:

A - The Sign

- (I) **The sign is in keeping with the character of the shop front and the area.**

- (ii) The sign is not positioned above fascia level.
- (iii) Existing first floor windows and architectural details such as string courses and pilasters are not obscured.
- (iv) Projecting signs on brackets are not set away from the fascia board.
- (v) Projecting signs should be sited high enough to avoid danger to pedestrians.
- (vi) Signage should not be over intensive.
- (vii) Materials used should reflect the character of the area. **B -**

Conservation areas and listed buildings

- (i) On listed buildings and in conservation areas the Council will seek a high standard of design which should conserve or enhance features or architectural or historic interest.
- (ii) Traditional fascia design with indirect lighting will be considered appropriate.

C - Illumination

- (i) Intermittently illuminated signs will not be considered appropriate.

D - Canopies

- (i) Canopies at first floor level will be resisted.

- 9.12.2 Advertisements are an important feature within shopping centres which, if managed properly, can enhance the street scene. Conversely, if uncontrolled, advertisements can detract from shopping centres, adversely affecting their appearance.
- 9.12.3 Whilst a degree of advertising on a shop front is an acceptable part of its commercial function and character, the building should be treated with respect and care taken to ensure that the advertising matter is well designed.
- 9.12.4 Whatever the type of advertisement, care should be taken in the choice of colours, lettering, styles and overall designs should harmonise with the building and the trade. Informative advertising includes such items as the name of the firm and the nature of the business. The fascia sign of a traditional display window easily has ample room to accommodate the information required without spreading on to other parts of the shop front, particularly above the fascia.
- 9.12.5 In some locations a hanging sign may be both helpful and appropriate. In these cases the traditional painted sign, externally lit on a wrought iron bracket at fascia level will easily be adequate for the purpose. The projecting internally illuminated plastic and metal sign is generally an unsatisfactory alternative as its materials and illumination would be out of keeping with traditional buildings, particularly in conservation areas.
- 9.12.6 Illumination is better if external to the sign and should not be brighter than to make the sign readable at night. Spotlighting, swan necked cowl lighting and pelmet lighting would normally be acceptable. The best illuminated advertisement is a well lit and well designed display, this tells the shopper far more about the goods on sale than an overhead sign, whilst bringing interest to the street scene.
- 9.12.7 The following general points are worth noting:

- Brightly lit small areas are preferable to large areas of dull illumination.
 - Preference will be given to externally illuminated hanging projecting signs rather than internally or externally illuminated fascia signs.
 - Tungsten/halogen lighting is preferable to fluorescent.
 - Siting should be discreet and avoid the creation of confusing shadows and highlights.
 - Within conservation areas and on listed buildings advertisements will only be permitted if they are appropriate to the character of the building on or adjacent to that on which they are situated.
- 9.12.8 The display of advertisements above the fascia at ground floor level will not normally be considered appropriate. The only exception to this is where there is separate tenancy or business on the upper floors of the building.
- 9.12.9 Externally mounted steel security shutters or grilles are visually unacceptable and should be avoided. In certain circumstances internally mounted grilles may be considered favourably.
- 9.12.10 This policy will apply to all new applications and applications for the renewal of existing advertisements. In cases where consent is not renewed, the council will take appropriate enforcement action, to secure removal of the adverts, if necessary.

9.12.9 SHUTTERS

POLICY S15

Within conservation areas externally mounted metal security shutters or grilles will not be considered acceptable. In certain circumstances internally mounted grilles may be considered appropriate.

- 9.12.10 Externally mounted steel security shutters or grilles are a visually unacceptable feature which detracts from the character of the conservation area. As such their use should be avoided. In certain circumstances internally mounted grilles may be considered favourably.

