



## HERITAGE SHOPFRONTS

### 1.0 HERITAGE SHOPFRONTS

Shopfronts are an important aspect of the public interface of retail premises and streetscapes. Early shopfronts are valuable elements of the heritage fabric of a place whether original or of later historic origins.

Retaining original door and window panels and fittings to an historic building is critical to that building's architectural identity or style. Original door panels, architraves, windows and fittings are always better than a contemporary manufactured version particularly as today's manufacturers do not accurately reproduce designs and details from the period 1850 - 1940.

Interwar shop fronts were generally similar to Edwardian shop treatments although the patterns of ceramic tiles and pressed metal were generally Jazz Moderne or Art Deco. In the mid-1920s, recessed entries became less common and the shop entry was sited at the same plane to the facade. Brass shopfronts were introduced after 1890.

Heritage practice in relation to shopfronts is applied through interpretation of the relevant general clauses of the Scheme and Policy. The objective is for the conservation and enhancement of heritage places which applies to shopfronts. There is therefore, the requirement to conserve existing historic fabric and to ensure that new fabric either enhances or does not adversely impact on the greater heritage place, ie, the building and the Heritage Overlay area.

### 1.1 Restoration and Alterations

The heritage practice in relation to shopfronts is based on the following principles. Generally:-

- Conservation and enhancement of early shopfronts and their various elements is encouraged. Shopfronts original to the parent building will have the high priority for conservation.;
- Removal will not be supported where a shopfront is considered original to the building or where a later shopfront displays valued design features;
- Removal and/or unsympathetic alteration to early shopfronts will not be supported regardless of any desired operational purpose;
- Sympathetic alteration to the glazed areas only (not to framing elements or doors) will be considered, providing the alteration is not intrusive in the format of the original design. In particular added structural elements would not be supported. Economic Industries - Metal Shopfronts are recommended for restoration works. Details: 51-57 Gertrude St Fitzroy VIC 3065 ph: 1300 655 269.
- The shopfront is located appropriately for the building type in relation to the boundary line, eg, Victorian shopfront frames were generally located 75-150mm from the front of the building allowing the separating piers to be clearly expressed, while interwar shopfronts were generally located on the front boundary.
- The whole of the frontage should be glazed side to side except for framing and when there is a side entry to an upper floor.
- The stall height should not exceed 700mm to top of frame.
- Glazing should generally be carried up to the structural member above.

- Shopfronts with fixed glazing and/or stalls should have ingos.
- Shopfront replacements of a heritage character will be acceptable preferably if based on documentary and/or physical evidence of an earlier historic shopfront, or if this information is not available, when of typical format for the typology of the parent building.

## 1.2 Contemporary Shopfronts

Shopfronts without a grading and therefore of no heritage value may be altered/replaced on the following provisos:-

- The new frontage contains no solid wall and the framing elements of the glazed area are minimized in number and size of members.
- Glazing is generally of full width and full height of the structural opening except, where required, for a solid stall to a maximum height of 700mm.
- A recessed entry is provided where the shopfront is of fixed glazing.
- Retractable shopfronts employ only frameless or metal framed construction of minimum sized sections. Timber framing will generally not be acceptable.
- The alteration of the street level frontage of buildings where the façade retains a non-retail format will not be supported, except to the extent that the lowering of existing window openings may be considered depending on the level of integrity of the existing façade, the design quality of the existing façade and the relevance of historic detail likely to be lost in the proposal.

## 1.3 Design issues


Shopfronts are the interface between a business and the public street. They are critical to the operation and presentation of the business behind them. Conversely, they help provide the “active” frontage to retail streets that is considered commercially and socially desirable both during and out of business hours.

Most original shopfronts in the CoPP have already been replaced, some of the replacements having already attained heritage status due to their age and/or architectural values. Historic shopfronts, both original and their early replacements need to be conserved to a high standard. This will generally mean minimal alteration to the original fabric.

Most early shopfronts have recessed entries (ingos) and had quality detailing and finishes in timber or metal. The value of this arrangement, one that increases window area and which leads customers into the shop is rarely appreciated. Flat shopfronts are generally considered less desirable.

Late 20<sup>th</sup> century shopfronts, typically of extruded anodized aluminium are rarely of high functional or aesthetic value. In particular, they are typically flat fronted without ingos, a characteristic that eliminates much of the identity of individual occupancies and diminishes the rhythm of the street frontage.

There has been a recent tendency for the presentation of clear windows and well designed window displays to be replaced by signs/posters adhered to the back of the glass, thereby obscuring the view of the interior. Associated with this is the addition of corporate branding to glass, in the form of coloured bands, etc, favoured by 24 hour stores. Elsewhere, where professionals (dentists, medical practitioners, etc) take over shops, the back of the glazing is frequently painted out. These practices have a negative impact on the street from an urban design perspective limiting the range and depth of view into premises and by creating gaps in the continuous interest of window displays along a retail street.



The use of roller shutters (the typical fruiterer's shop) is occasionally proposed. These produce a clumsy accretion on the façade and have the effect of eliminating a shopfront out of hours, with a resultant loss of vitality and interest.

Some frontages to retail streets are not retail premises. They can be banks, post offices, hotels and early chambers (office) buildings. Their different street frontage is an important aspect of the heritage streetscape and even though they may have been quit by the original occupants or are seeking greater exposure, preserving the variations (small windows and perhaps higher floor levels) is important. Conversion of these frontages to shopfronts is not desirable.

Another tendency has been to use the shopfront as a servery directly onto the street. This raises issues of obstruction of footpaths and the appropriation of public space for a purpose that should be accommodated within the site. Refer CoPP Footpath Trading Guidelines.

#### **1.4 Definitions:**

Piers are the separating structure between shops.

Ingo is a recessed entry, either rectangular or splayed.

Stall is the low section of wall below the shopfront glazing.

Transom is a horizontal framing member, often at door height.