

*Security Measures
for Retail and
Commercial Premises*

*Supplementary
Planning Guidance*

DOVER

DISTRICT COUNCIL





Introduction

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1.1 The District Council has an obligation to help reduce the incidence and fear of crime but it also has a commitment to improve the general attractiveness of the built environment, especially the quality of the town centres.

1.2 The effect of insensitively designed security measures works against a vibrant shopping and commercial environment. They give the impression of an area which is both run-down and vulnerable to crime (figure 1). Not only is this harmful to the visual character of the built environment it can be counterproductive in that it serves to discourage general activity and the potential for self policing. Potential investors may also be dissuaded from investing if these measures create the image of a crime-ridden environment. In the long term this can do nothing but damage the environmental quality and economic prosperity of the District.

Figure 1

Right: Solid roller shutters alter the external appearance of a building and can create a fortress-like atmosphere.



Left: Internal grilles do not involve alterations to the shopfront and retain the shop's attractiveness.

1.3 The Council acknowledges that the overall visual appearance of a town centre and measures to increase security requires a co-ordinated approach and should not be dealt with in isolation. Whilst the levels of crime in the District are not a particular problem, the Council has produced this guidance to help property owners to secure their premises in an effective and sensitive way. This guidance has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance to Policy DD18 of the Dover District Local Plan by the Council, and will be an important material consideration in the determination of planning applications.



Policy DD18

Permission for external security shutters and grilles on shopfronts and other commercial buildings will not be granted if they would detract from the character and appearance of the building and the area in which they are situated.

1.4 The Plan also states that “In particular, ‘solid’ externally mounted roller shutters (including shutters which are perforated) are unacceptable on shops and listed buildings, and in conservation areas. Solutions such as using laminated glass, having a traditional shopfront rather than a floor to ceiling plate glass window or fitting internal lattice grilles are to be preferred” (paragraph 8.59).

The need for planning permission

1.5 Any material change to the external appearance of a shopfront or other commercial premises will require planning permission eg. the installation of a new shopfront and the fitting of external security shutters and grilles. The use of internal security measures does not normally need planning permission if they are positioned behind the window glazing, unless they are part of a re-design of the front facade of the building. If the premises is a listed building, external and any internal security measures which affect the character of the building will always require listed building consent. For help and advice on whether proposals require planning permission or listed building consent do not hesitate to contact the Council’s planning department.

Comprehensive Security Appraisal

1.6 Any efforts to secure the most highly visible features of a premises, the main frontage, without considering the security aspects of the remainder of the building may prove largely ineffective in reducing the security risk to goods and property. Most break-ins occur either through the roof or from the rear of a property and the existence of security shutters which obscure the window can positively aid thieves by concealing them from passers by in the street.

1.7 A comprehensive appraisal of the security for the whole building should therefore be carried out by a qualified assessor prior to submitting a planning application to fully identify the security risks and the most appropriate way of tackling them. Insurers may be able to assist in this matter. It may be that simple measures such as lever deadlocks on doors and locks on windows could vastly enhance the security of a building at minimal cost. In addition, using internal security cameras to focus on the window display out of shopping hours is good practice. Further advice on the issue of security can often be obtained from the Kent Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer.

Aims

The aims of this advice note are to:

- ♦ assist in the security of retail and other commercial premises;
- ♦ safeguard the environmental quality of the built environment;
- ♦ encourage security measures which foster the vitality and viability of town centres and other commercial areas;
- ♦ promote good design principles in the installation of security measures; and
- ♦ help applicants to prepare schemes which can gain planning permission in compliance with the policy in the Dover District Local Plan.



General Design Principles

2.1 Where a comprehensive security appraisal of the premises demonstrates that the use of external security measures is justified they will need to be installed in such a way as to minimise their overall effect on the appearance of the building. Only the window glazing should be covered when grilles are in operation so as to keep visible any attractive features. They should also always be painted or coated in a colour to be sympathetic to the existing building.

2.2 Additionally, where roller grilles are to be used on the main elevations of a shop any guide rails for the rollers should be hidden by pilasters and not merely attached to the shopfront. The housing box for the roller assembly should be located behind the fascia and not result in the fascia becoming more prominent and proud of the remainder of the shopfront. Therefore, projecting shutter boxes will not be allowed.

2.3 When a new shopfront is being designed and space is available, room should always be left for the installation of a roller box, even if it is not intended to install one when the shopfront is being fitted. In this way, should there be a future justified need for external security measures, they should be able to be accommodated without compromising the overall design of the shopfront (figure 2). Therefore, in considering proposals for new shopfronts, planning permission will only be granted where space is made available for the future installation of a roller box, or subject to the imposition of a condition requiring full details of the method of installing a roller box behind the

fascia to be submitted and approved prior to the installation of the shop front.

2.4 When proposing a scheme for the re-design of an existing facade, applicants should give consideration to the installation of sub-divisions in the window rather than the use of a floor to ceiling plate glass window. Smaller window panes prove cheaper to replace if they ever get broken and may in the long run serve to reduce insurance premiums.

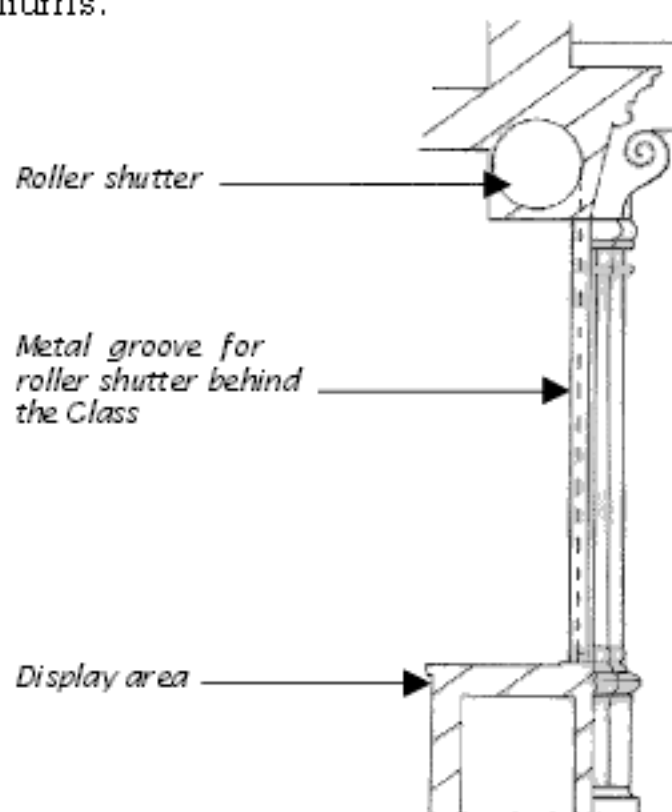


Figure 2.
Cross Section through a shop front to show the detail of an Internal Roller Shutter

Further guidance on the design of shopfronts is given in Design Guide No.1 Shopfronts in Conservation Areas.

External Security Measures

3.1 Once a comprehensive security appraisal has been undertaken and it can be demonstrated that there is no other suitable alternative but to install external security hardware to premises, the use of external grilles might be permitted. Because of their visual impact very careful consideration will be given to the use of such grilles, especially on listed buildings and in conservation areas.

3.2 When making a planning application the applicant will be requested to submit a security appraisal setting out the security risk, the existing security measures in place and how the proposal would relate to the perceived security risk.

3.3 In shopping areas solid external shutters have very low aesthetic appeal and create dead frontage. They also provide the opportunity for



graffiti and illegal fly posting. The perforated style can also have a similar effect to the solid type in terms of generating a blank appearance, with views of any window display being completely or severely obscured depending on the angle of sight (figure 3). Both these shutter designs are inappropriate and will not be permitted on the main elevations of any shop and other commercial building in the District's shopping areas. They may, however, be appropriate on industrial buildings and the rear elevations of premises in shopping areas.

3.4 From a design point of view, open grilles will

be preferred in shopping areas as they allow light to be emitted from the premises and retain interest outside normal opening hours. In exceptional cases, open grilles incorporating clear perspex within the grille would be permitted provided it could be demonstrated

through the security appraisal that there is a compelling need to protect the shop window glazing from acts of vandalism.



Figure 3.
Perforated Roller Shutter

Alternative Security Options

4.1 The use of electrical alarm and security camera systems, the installation of laminated glass or the fixing of internal grilles behind a window may also provide an effective deterrent to the would be criminal. All these options have minimal visual impact on the appearance of a building and an area in general. They allow visibility of the window display and let light spill into the street. This not only retains interest in the street scene it also allows the opportunity for passive surveillance of goods and property. They also provide a degree of protection against acts of vandalism to window glazing.

4.2 Because of their limited visual impact careful consideration should always be given to whether the use of any one or a combination of these measures could satisfactorily combat the perceived security risk. As these options do not materially affect the external appearance of a building they can normally be carried out without the need for planning permission. It should be noted that if it is a listed building, consent will be required (see section the need for planning permission).

4.3 Laminated glass consists of two or more sheets of glass bonded together using a special plastic interlayer. This type of glass properly combines safety with security. It will only suffer cracking around the point of impact whilst the remainder of the window pane usually remains intact. It is manufactured in a range of thicknesses and is available from most glazing specialists.

4.4 The use of vibration sensors is one of the measures that can be used to help prevent indiscriminate acts of vandalism against window glazing.

4.5 If property owners are considering replacing glass in their premises, it would be wise to install 6.8mm laminated glass to BS6206. This is the best means to reduce the risk of personal injury from high speed flying glass in the event of a terrorist attack.

4.6 Alternatively, in certain circumstances, anti shatter film or laminated glass fitted on the inside of double glazing can help reduce the risk. Further advice on the above can be obtained from the National Terrorist Crime Prevention Unit.

4.7 Grilles are generally fabricated in an open brickbond pattern in aluminium, steel or plastic rods and tubes connected by vertical links (figure 4). They can be the roller or collapsible mesh type. This security system allows for backlighting and the window display to remain visible from the street. It does not alter the external appearance of a building and will be encouraged.

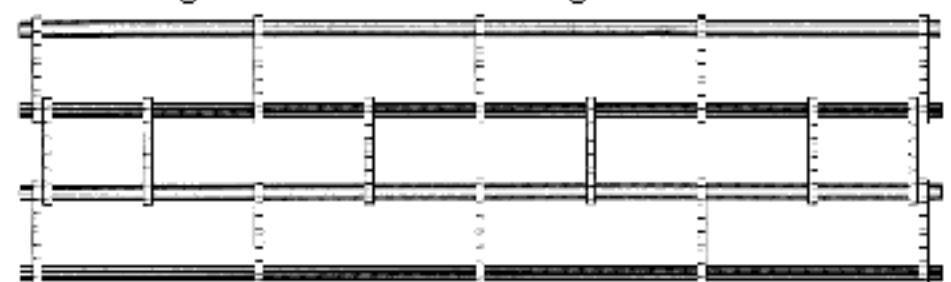


Figure 4. Internal Grilles



Checklist for Applicants

- ✓ Make sure that you take a good look at the overall security of the building and carry out a security appraisal to identify the security risks and the best way of tackling them.
- ✓ If your proposals need planning permission remember that you will be asked to submit a security appraisal to accompany your planning application.
- ✓ Do think first about security options such as alarm systems, laminated glass and internal grilles, which have the least visual impact.
- ✓ If you can justify that there is no other suitable option but to install external security measures then use the open grille type.
- ✓ Always avoid the use of solid and perforated style shutters on the main elevations of a building.
- ✓ Be careful not to install security grilles in a way which spoils the appearance of the building and the streetscene.
- ✓ If you think that you need help and advice, particularly if you are unsure as to whether your proposals require planning permission, then contact the planning department.

Further Advice and Information

This guidance has been adopted as supplementary planning guidance to Policy DD18 of the Dover District Local Plan by the Council and will be an important material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.

For further advice regarding the contents of this leaflet please contact:

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*Produced by
Dover District Council
Forward Planning Section
January 2002*