Lancaster Civic Vision

Celebrating our Heritage – Enhancing our Environment – Shaping our Future

SHOPFRONTS IN LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

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We tend to ignore shopfronts, looking past them to the displays inside. This guide reminds us of the changing designs of the frontages themselves. Here we focus on the smaller, independent shops in central Lancaster and Morecambe.

Early nineteenth-century shopfronts have rarely survived but, with their bow fronts and small panes of glass, they have been reproduced in Oldbell café in Bashful Alley (Lancaster) and Fox & Medcalfe's pharmacy on King Street (Lancaster). What have survived are the Victorian and Edwardian styles, either with their original materials or in more recent adaptations and refurbishments.



The Paper Gallery, now closed and redesigned

The key features to look out for – many are shown above in the former Paper Gallery shop on Market Street, Lancaster – include these:

the recessed doorway and mosaic or terrazzo entrance flooring;

the doorway gate;
the solid stallriser (perhaps with ventilation grills for the basement) from the pavement up to the shop windows;
the flat or curved main windows;
the more complex window structure above the main windows;
the pilasters and corbels to left and right of the main windows that separate the shop from its neighbour;
the hanging shop sign;
the fascia with the shop's name and perhaps a cornice above that.

Here are some examples.









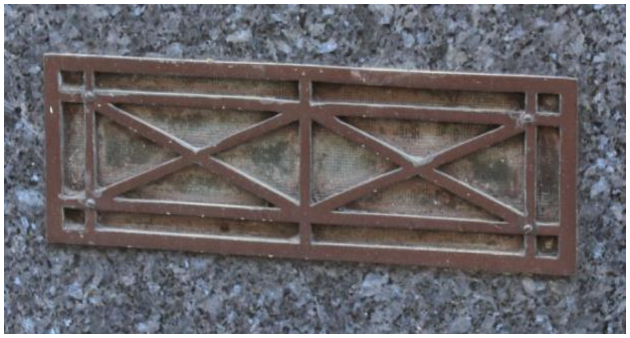
The interwar period saw these features reinterpreted in what we would now call an Art Deco style. The shapes have become simpler and geometric, particularly squares and triangles and a sunburst motif – Brucianni's (Marine Drive Central, Morecambe) is a good example, outside and inside.













The postwar period has seen two trends. One has been the re-interpretation of the classic elements of the shopfront though in a simpler style, for example, Arteria on Brock Street, Lancaster. Conservation guidance in key areas has promoted this approach. The other trend has been to simplify the shopfront to a minimalist plate-glass sheet from pavement to ceiling.







Further reading
The local planning guidance on shopfronts can be found at:
https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/planning/regeneration/morecambe-townscape-heritage-initiative-2-a-view-for-eric/design-maintenance-guidance/

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