



Swansea  
city centre





Building Enhancement Programme  
Oxford Street Swansea

Design Guide



This Design Guide has been prepared to provide practical guidance for design proposals to improve the quality of the Facades and Shopfronts to the Western end of Oxford Street in conjunction with Commercial Property BEP Grant Applications.

March 2010

This document has been prepared on behalf of The City and County of Swansea and the Welsh Assembly Government by



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[www.dewievans.com](http://www.dewievans.com)

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# 01 Background

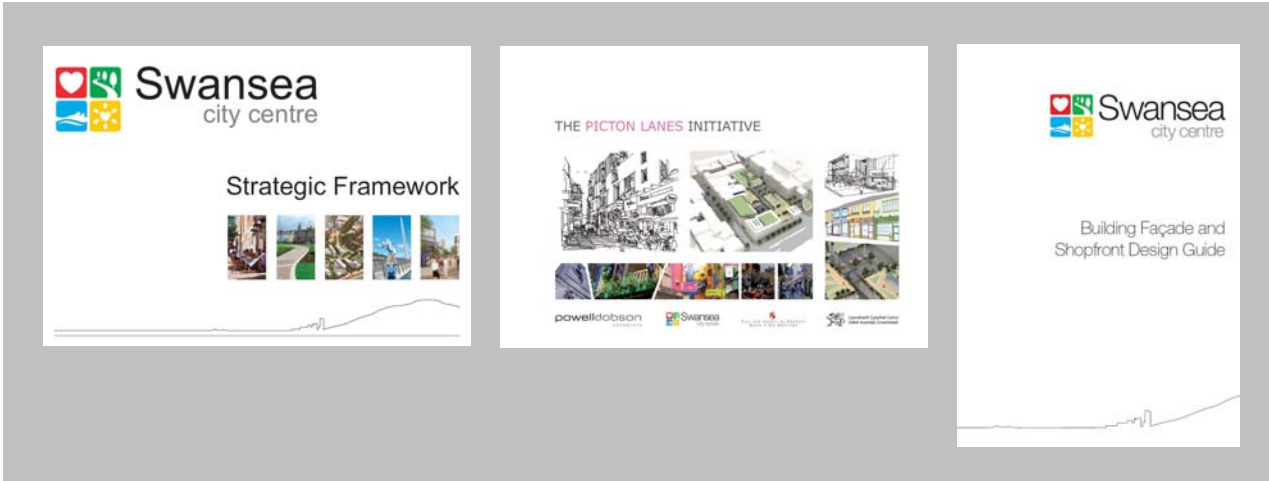
The City and County of Swansea and the Welsh Assembly Government working in partnership through a joint venture, are the main public sector bodies promoting the regeneration of the Swansea City Centre.

The Joint Venture partners together with the Swansea City Partnership, commissioned the Swansea City Centre Strategy Framework in 2007 which set out a regeneration strategy for Swansea over the next 20 years.

Subsequently, a Building Façade and Shopfront Design Guide was commissioned to assist the delivery of the Building Enhancement Programme (BEP) which provides discretionary grants to improve commercial property within the CCSF area. The aim is to promote good quality building façade and shopfront design to instil greater civic pride in the City and to raise perceptions of visitors, residents and potential investors.

To bring forward the regeneration of the Lower Oxford Street Area, identified as an important location for targeting regeneration efforts, an area-based study of the Lower Oxford Street Area was commissioned in 2009, giving rise to 'The Picton Lanes Initiative'. This provided a comprehensive assessment of the development potential of the area and set out general principles for its regeneration. It identified opportunities to improve the public realm, development of the former Oxford School site (currently used for car parking) and enhancement of commercial building frontages.

To inform individual project delivery of BEP projects within the Lower Oxford Street area, Dewi Evans Architects was commissioned in January 2010 to provide detailed and practical guidance to property owners and occupiers as the next step towards delivery of building enhancements.



## 02 Introduction

Lower Oxford Street is an area on the periphery of the main shopping centre and consists of a wide mixture of independent retail and commercial units. The area is locally distinctive and has a strong character whilst offering a wide range of facilities. The buildings are very varied with little architectural quality and whilst there is a considerable degree of life and vibrancy in the street scene, it is visually chaotic and there are considerable opportunities for improvement and development.

Establishing general principles with a common approach for the improvement of the buildings will help to develop a stronger character and identity for the street whilst still retaining the opportunity for creative individual designs.

The existing street scene within the Study Area, as defined on Page 4, is analysed to define the various building types and identify key locations in the overall street scene.

Practical advice is then given for the improvement of each building type and key locations.

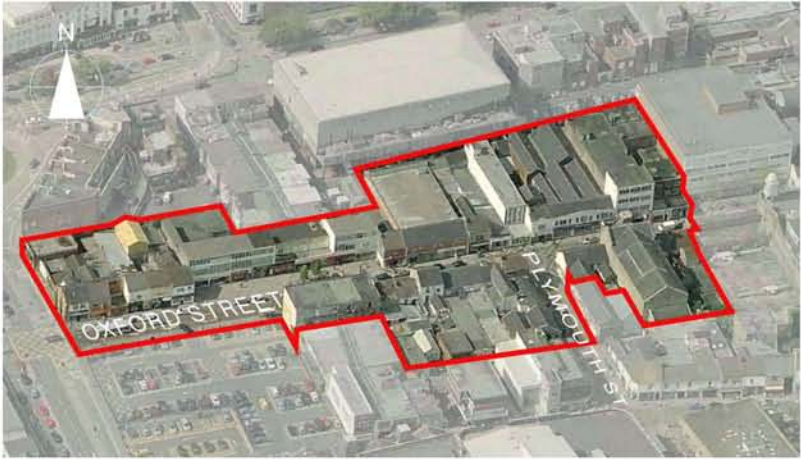
The guide should be read in conjunction with the Swansea City Centre Building Façade and Shopfront Design Guide which sets out good principles and provides good general advice. Guidance is given on

- Overall façade design
- Shopfront design
- Signage
- Canopies
- Security
- Lighting
- Accessibility
- Materials and colours
- Sustainability

The guidelines are intended to encourage a high quality of design but not stifle creative or innovative design. When design proposals are prepared by suitably qualified professionals and are supported by a suitable Design Statement, the proposals should be considered on their merits.

[www.swanseaacitycentre.com](http://www.swanseaacitycentre.com)

# 03 The Study Area



Area Included in the Guide



Oxford Street / Nelson Street Conservation Area



Aerial View



Outline Plan



Existing Streetscene Elevations : Oxford Street Facing South

## 04 The Existing Street Scene

The study area includes the Western End of Oxford Street and part of Plymouth Street and adjoins the main retail area of the City to the East. The pedestrianised city centre extends to the junction of Oxford Street with Plymouth Street.

Dillwyn Street, a main traffic route, terminates the study area to the West.

The area has typical urban grain consisting of small established independent businesses offering a wide variety of facilities and services.

The area is busy, being close to the main bus station. Oxford Street also provides access to two shopping arcades, Picton Arcade to the North and Shoppers Walk to the South.

The streets have developed over a long period of time and have a wide range of building types ranging from traditional two storey buildings, an impressive Victorian building to conventional commercial properties constructed in the 1950's and 1960's.

The overall condition of the buildings is varied and there has been a general lack of investment in the area. Many of the building have been altered in an inappropriate manner. The resulting street scene offers considerable opportunities for improvement.



Oxford Street today



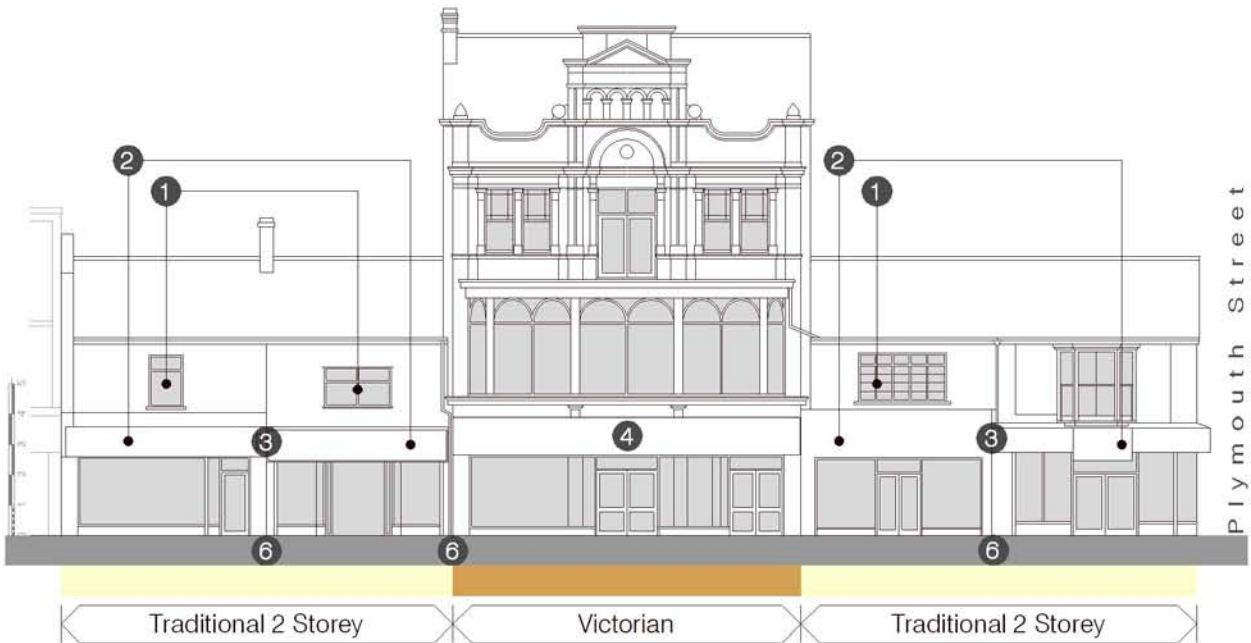
Historic Oxford Street



Existing Streetscene Elevations : Plymouth Street facing East & Oxford Street Facing North



# 19 – 23 Oxford Street



- ① windows out of keeping with building style
- modern shop frontages out of keeping with building style
- ② oversized fascias and signage
- ③ uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- ④ oversized fascia and signage unrelating to the upper part of the building
- party walls obscured
- solid security shutters outside shopfronts are detrimental to the street scene

There are considerable opportunities for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 18, 19 & 20



## 52/52a Plymouth Street



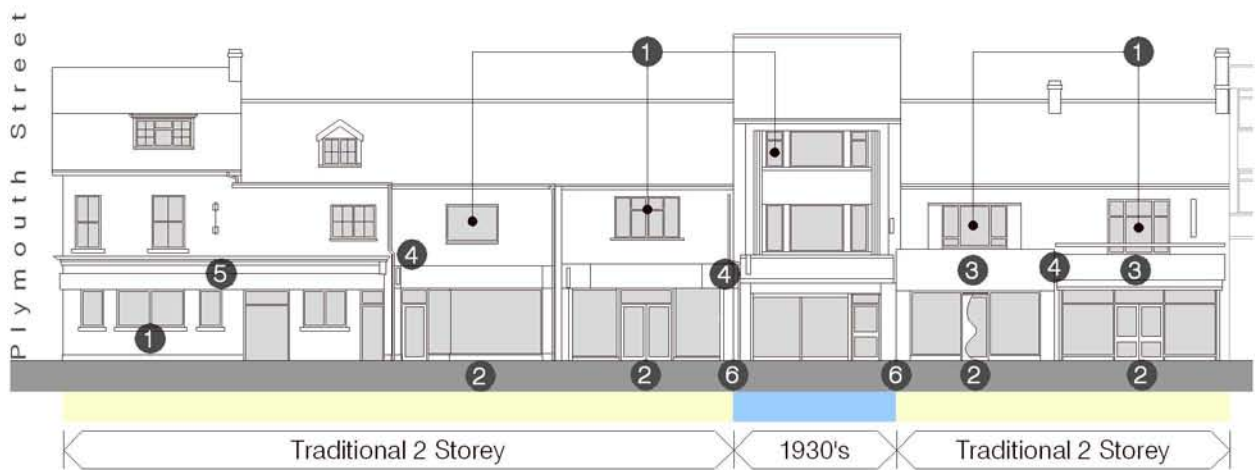
- ① windows out of keeping with building style
- ② undisciplined arrangement of windows
- ③ solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene
- ④ poorly located satellite dishes
- ⑤ ineffective and poorly located lighting
- ⑥ uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage

There is scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 18 & 19



Plymouth Street East Facing Elevation

## 24 – 30 Oxford Street

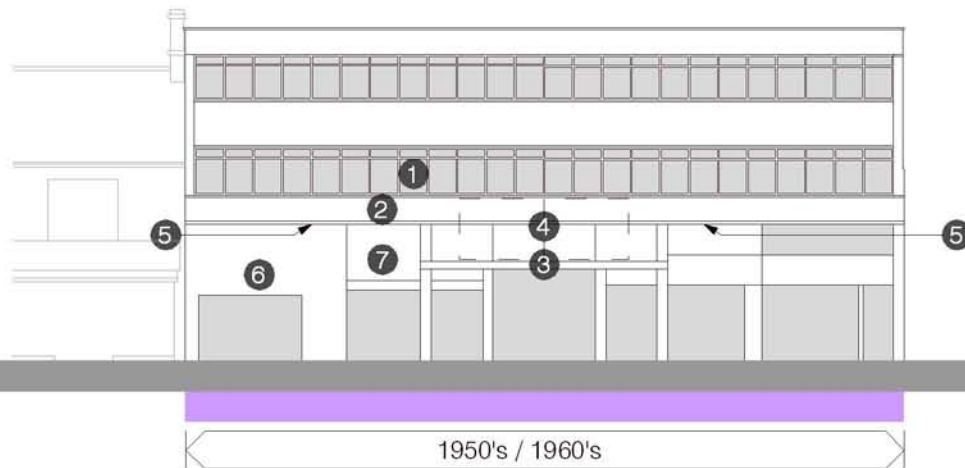


- ① windows out of keeping with building style
- ② modern shop frontages out of keeping with building style
- ③ oversized fascias and signage
- ④ uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- ⑤ inappropriate lighting
- party walls obscured
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene

There is considerable scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 18, 19 & 22



## 31 – 34 Oxford Street



- generally lack of investment in building envelope
- 1 poorly adapted windows
- 2 poorly located signage
- 3 visually weak canopy
- 4 ineffective sign with little visual impact and low prominence
- 5 dark and gloomy soffit
- 6 underglazed shopfront
- 7 inappropriate materials
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene

There is considerable scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 23 & 25



## 212 – 217 Oxford Street



- windows out of keeping with building style
- 1 inappropriate parapets
- 2 modern shop frontages out of keeping with building style
- oversized fascias and signage generally
- 3 uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- 4 inappropriate canopy
- 5 interruption of the building line
- party walls obscured
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene
- tortuous rainwater discharge

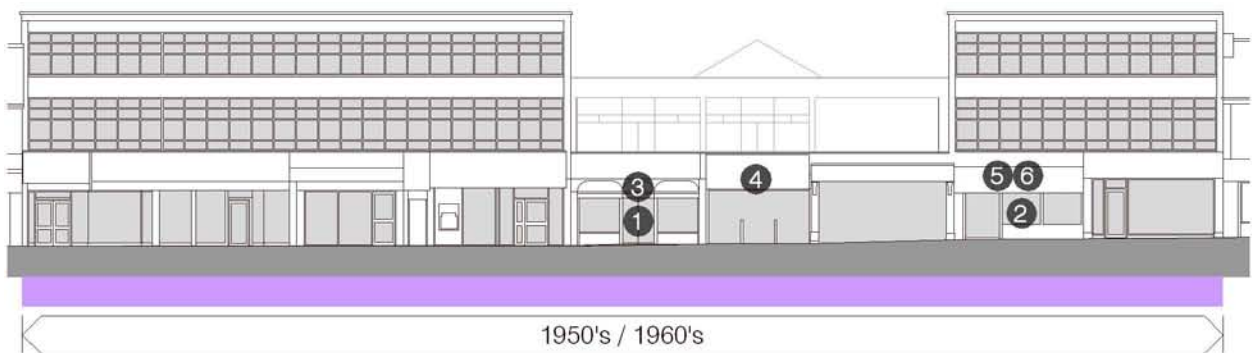
There are considerable opportunities for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 18 & 19

212 - 217



Oxford Street South Facing Elevation

## 218 – 226 Oxford Street



- generally lack of investment in building envelope
- uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- 1 shopfront out of keeping with building style
- 2 poorly designed shopfront
- 3 inappropriate canopies
- 4 weak entrance to Picton Arcade with inadequate signage
- 5 poorly located fascia
- 6 inappropriate materials
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene

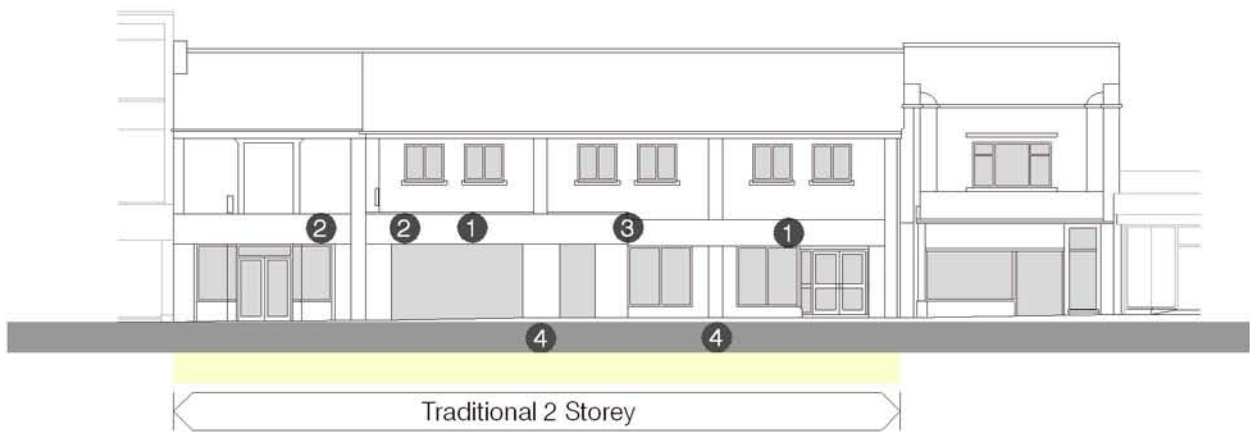
There is scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 23 & 24

218 - 226



Oxford Street South Facing Elevation

## 227 – 230 Oxford Street



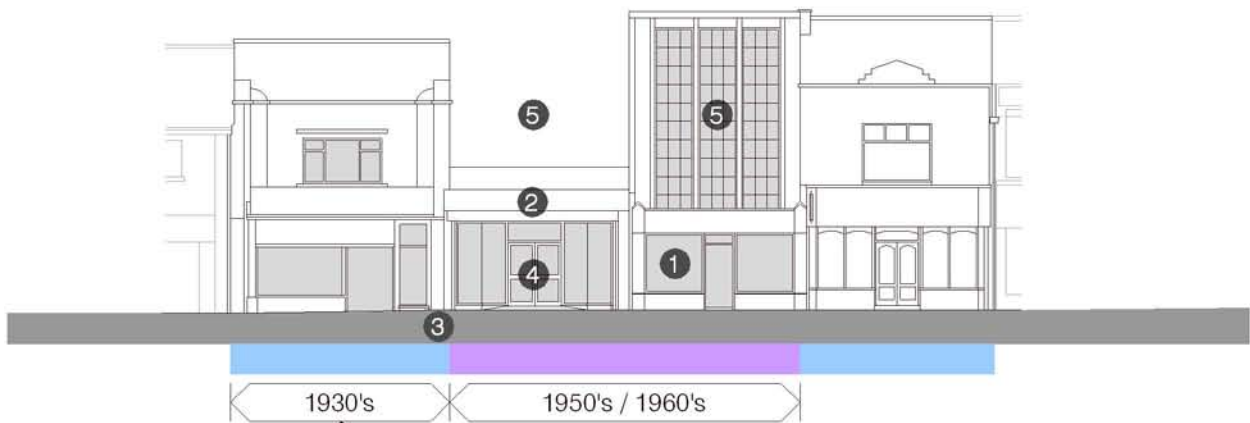
- ① strong horizontal emphasis along elevation out of keeping with building style
- modern shop frontages out of keeping with building style
- ② oversized fascias and signage
- ③ uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- ④ party walls obscured
- windows out of keeping with building style
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene

There is scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 18 & 19



Oxford Street South Facing Elevation

## 231 – 233 Oxford Street



recently upgraded facade showing

- clearly identifiable shop
- good framework and signage
- appropriate canopy
- appropriate materials

- identified as a key location marking the junction of Oxford Street with Plymouth Street
- ① shopfront out of keeping with building style
- ② oversized fascias and signage
- ③ party walls obscured
- ④ solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene
- ⑤ recessed gap and long view through at upper floor level

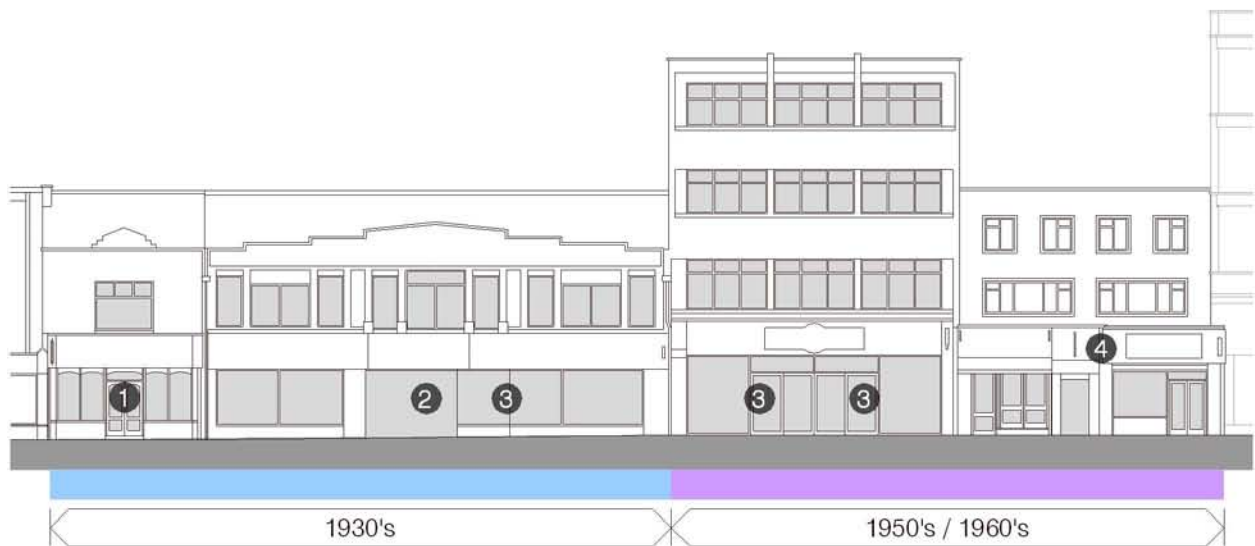
There is considerable scope for improvement and a development opportunity at first floor level above numbers 232 and 233. Guidance is given on pages 17, 22, 23 & 26



Oxford Street South Facing Elevation



## 234 - 242 Oxford Street



- ① shop front out of keeping with the building style
- ② shopfront out of keeping with the symmetrical building style
- ③ first floor visual support unclear
- ④ uncoordinated and poorly arranged signage
- solid security shutters detrimental to the street scene

There is scope for improvement. Guidance is given on pages 17, 22 & 23



Oxford Street South Facing Elevation

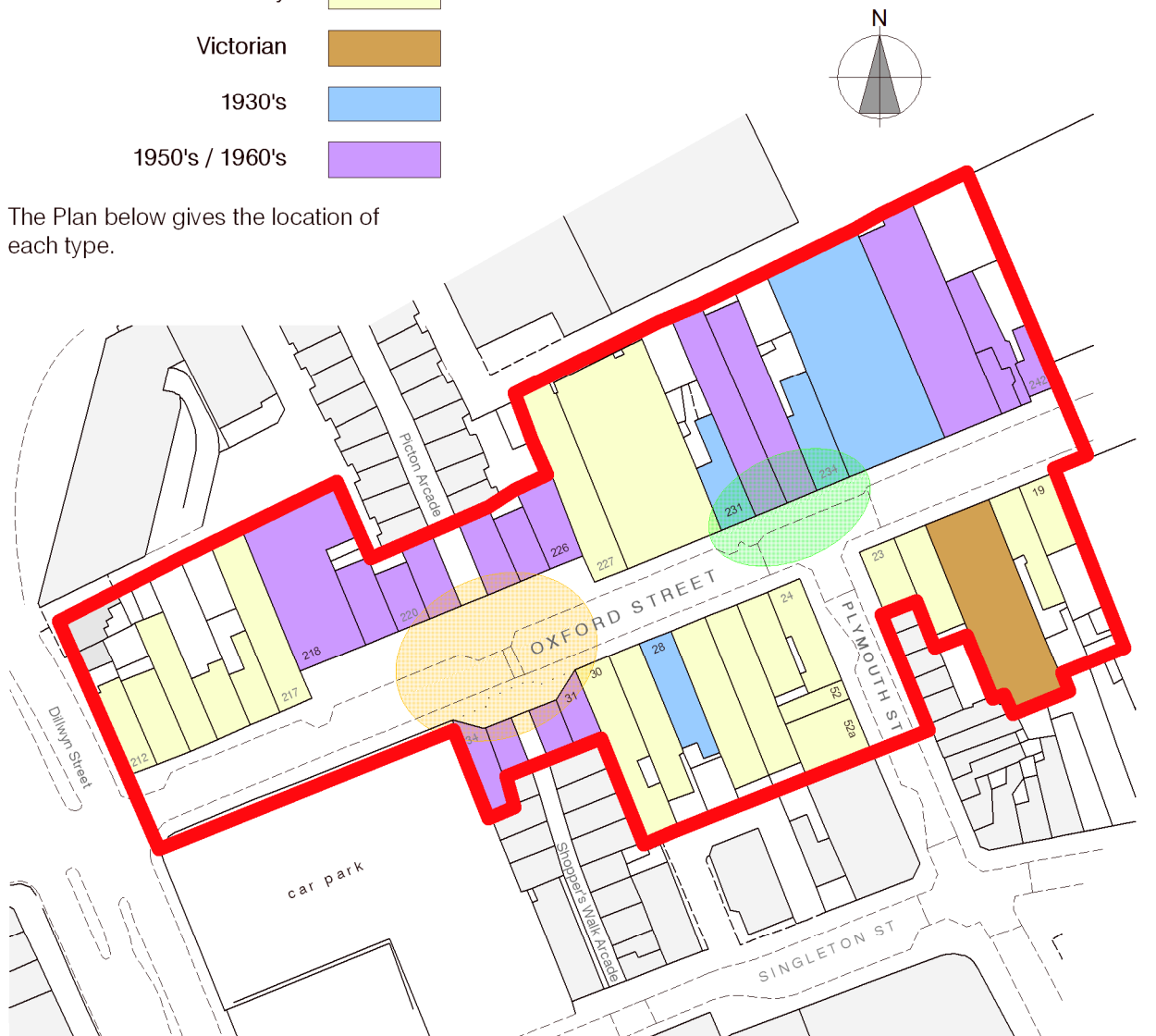
# Building Types & Key Locations

## BUILDING TYPES

The appraisal of the existing street scene demonstrates there are essentially 4 different types of building style within the study area. These are:

- Traditional 2 Storey
- Victorian
- 1930's
- 1950's / 1960's

The Plan below gives the location of each type.



## KEY LOCATIONS

In addition there are 2 key locations which need special consideration.

It would be desirable for the entrances to the arcades to have a common theme.

In general terms there is an opportunity for the streetscape in these areas to be enhanced.

Entrances to Picton Arcade and Shoppers Walk



Junction of Oxford Street with Plymouth Street



## 05 Design Guidance

The following Design Guidance is intended to establish clearly understood principles which should be taken into account when design proposals are submitted for individual buildings.

The intention is that by adopting a common approach for the improvement of the buildings the end result will be a stronger character and identity for the street.

The Design Guide is not intended to stifle creative or innovative design and variety and individuality within the overall framework is to be encouraged.

General Guidance is also given in the Swansea City Centre Building Façade and Shopfront Design Guide.

## General Principles

The four identified different building types are each built in accordance with distinct design principles which need to be understood and respected so that the general character of the building is built upon and enhanced.

Key design principles to be considered include

- The overall form and proportion of the building
- Roof treatment and in particular detailing at the eaves and the method of rainwater disposal
- The overall façade treatment and window arrangement
- Suitably designed and proportioned shopfronts at street level
- Maintaining the identity and individuality of the building within the overall street scene

The design at ground level where the building interacts with the street is clearly the most prominent element of the façade and the following more detailed design principles need to be considered.

- Defining party walls to maintain a vertical rhythm in the street scene
- Providing suitable proportioned shopfronts with a suitable glazing pattern in keeping with the style of the building.
- Ensuring that separate entrances to upper floors are clearly defined
- Providing suitably proportioned fascias and defining suitable zones for signage
- Providing suitable locations and dimensions for projecting signs
- Providing suitable external lighting – external strip, internally illuminated fascias on modern style buildings, illuminated lettering and neon signage.
- Providing a suitable style of canopy – a traditional fully retractable canopy is considered appropriate.
- Providing suitable security measures which maintain a welcoming and vibrant street scene. The use of security glazing is considered preferable but where a grille has to be installed then the use of internally located open mesh security shutters is considered appropriate.
- Ensuring that the buildings are accessible in terms of access, lighting and signage - the provisions of the Building Regulations and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) should be taken into consideration.
- The use of appropriate materials and colours from palettes suitable to the building style.
- Addressing the issues of sustainability by the consideration of recycling if possible, the use of appropriate materials to reduce future maintenance. Minimising the energy consumption of the building and improving the thermal performance to reduce annual running costs.

## Traditional 2 Storey



### Facade and Shopfront General Guidance

- A Traditional eaves treatment retained or reinstated.
- B Powder coated aluminium traditional half round gutters with circular downpipes at party wall positions.
- C Traditional window pattern as shown sized approx 1.2 x 1.8m recessed into face of wall by minimum 100mm. 150mm deep reconstituted stone traditional cill and optional plain raised surround.
- D Traditional bay window reinstated.
- E Decorated smooth finished render varying colours of mid tone.
- F Shopfront frame with plinth, pilaster and console traditionally detailed.
- G Fascia - top normally aligned with first floor level and with a depth no greater than 1/5th of the total frame height.
- H Projecting weatherproof coping
- I Entrance to first floor to be separate and clearly defined.
- J Paired pilasters at party wall locations.



## Shopfront and Signage Detailed Guidance

- L** Traditional detailed shopfronts.
- M** Traditionally designed doors with suitable width and flush threshold for accessibility
- N** Solid stall riser height 450mm
- P** Traditional fully retractable canopy, if required, incorporated into the shopfront
- R** Security glazing
- S** Open mesh internally installed security shutters.
- T** Signage zone incorporating lettering no larger than 3/4 the height of the fascia with similar margins.
- U** Low level projecting signs to be located within the fascia of equal height and projection.
- V** Consideration to be given to street numbering position
- Lighting**
  - illuminated lettering
  - strip fluorescent external lighting
  - internally illuminated projecting signs

# Victorian



## General Facade and Shopfront Guidance

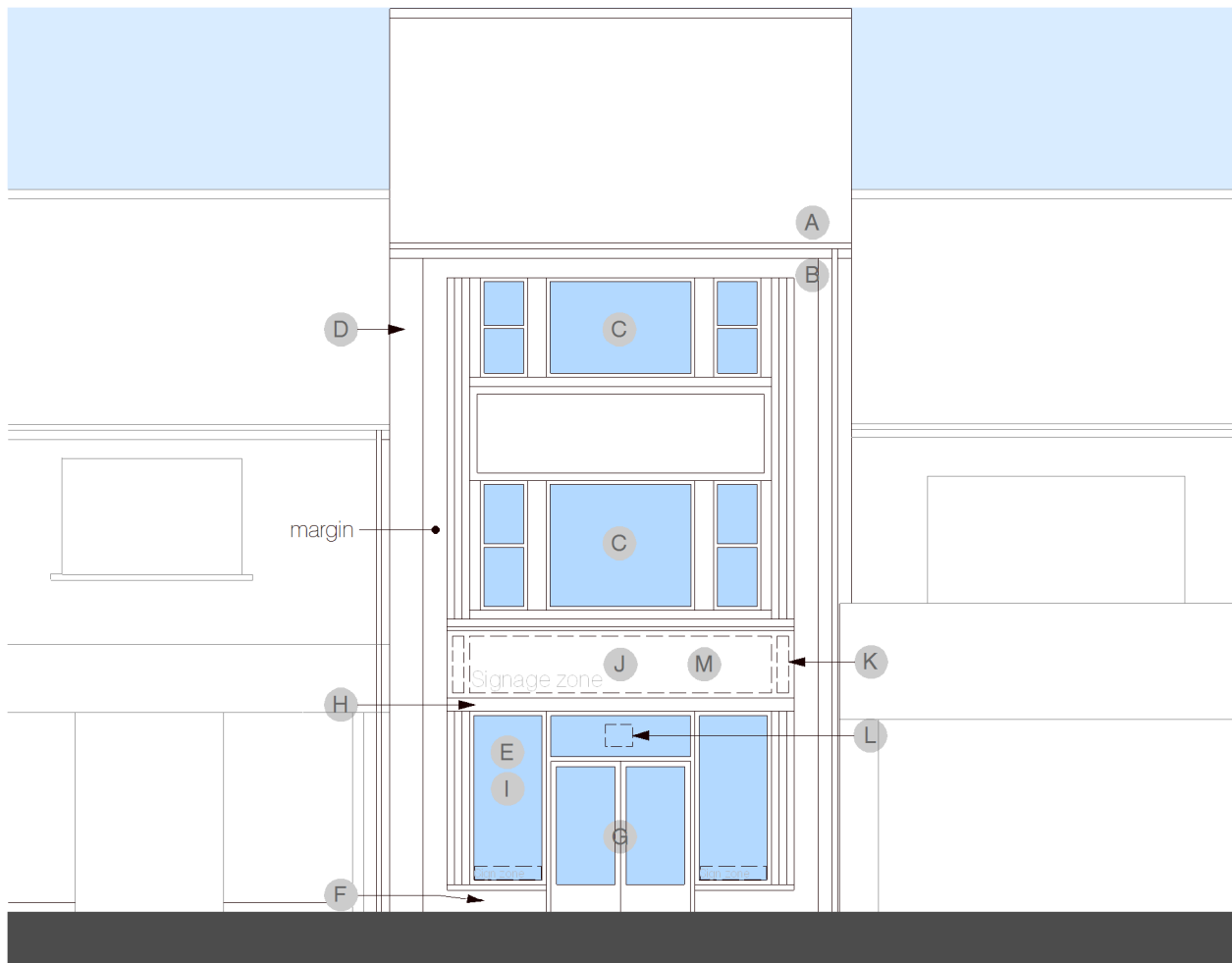
- A Shopfront frame with plinth, pilaster and console traditionally detailed.
- B Fascia - depth no greater than 1/5th of the total frame height.
- C Projecting weatherproof cornice
- D Entrance to adjacent unit to be separate and clearly defined.

## Detailed Shopfront and Signage Guidance

- E Traditional detailed shopfronts.
- F Traditionally designed doors with suitable width and flush threshold for accessibility
- G Solid stall riser height 450mm
- H Traditional fully retractable canopy, if required, incorporated into the shopfront
- I Security glazing
- J Open mesh internally installed security shutters.
- K Signage zones incorporating lettering no larger than 3/4 the height of the fascia with similar margins.
- L Low level projecting signs to be located within the fascia of equal height and projection.
- M Consideration to be given to street numbering position
- N Lighting
  - illuminated lettering
  - strip fluorescent external lighting
  - internally illuminated projecting signs
- Colours to be selected from a Victorian colour palette



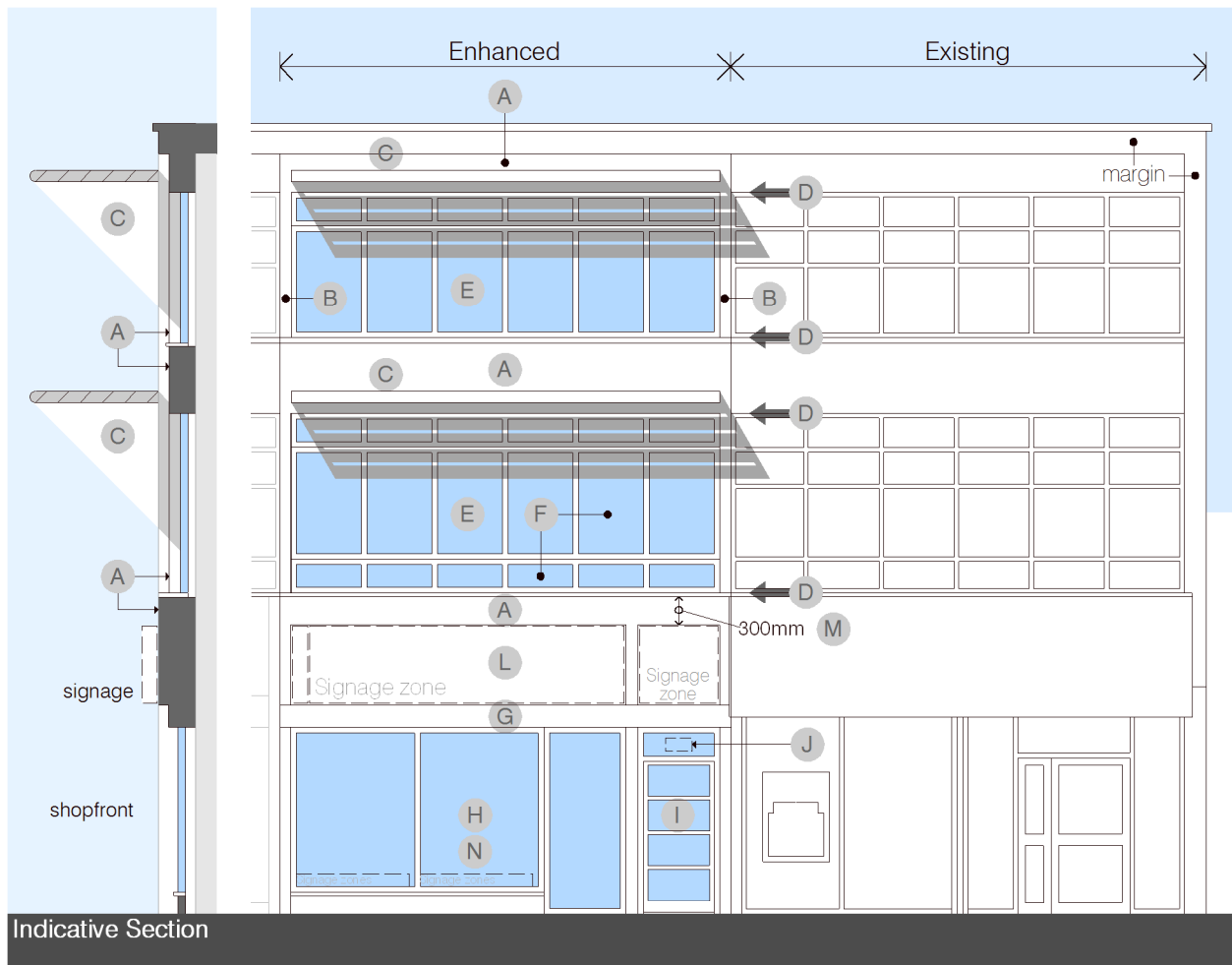
1930's



## Overall Guidance

- A Traditional eaves treatment retained or reinstated.
- B Powder coated aluminium half round gutters with circular downpipes at party wall positions.
- C Window pattern in keeping with building style.
- D Decorated smooth finished render in white or off white colours.
- E Symmetrical modern shopfront incorporating detail features to match upper floors
- F Solid stall riser height to match margins
- G Traditionally designed doors with suitable width and flush threshold for accessibility
- H Traditional fully retractable canopy, if required, incorporated into the shopfront
- I Open mesh internally installed security shutters.
- J Signage zones contained within framed margins.
- K Low level projecting signs to be located within the fascia of equal height and projection.
- L Consideration to be given to street numbering position
- M Lighting
  - illuminated lettering
  - internally illuminated fascia signs and projecting signs

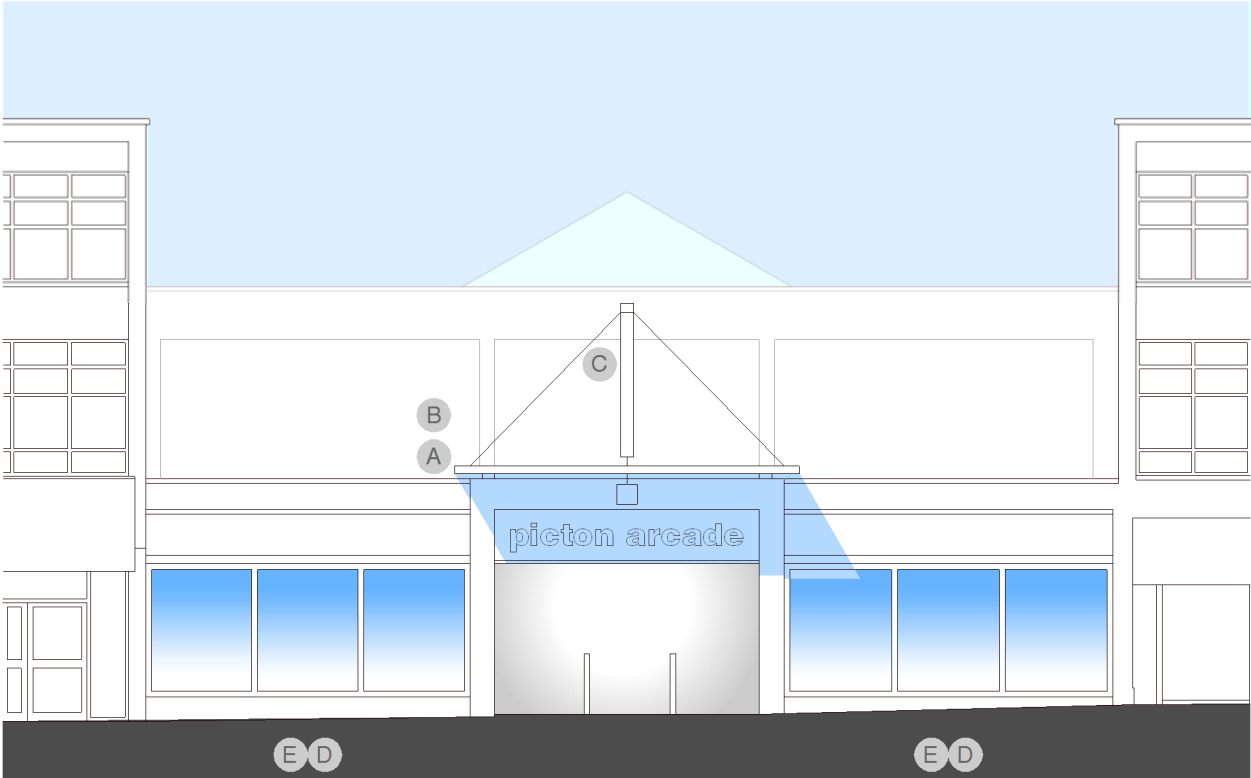
## 1950's / 1960's



### Overall Guidance

- A Flat metal faced insulated over cladding contained within margins
- B Side margin introduced for practical purposes to separate units
- C Possible use of metal solar shading
- D Retained cill and head levels
- E Rationalised window patterns
- F Use of solid insulated panels as part of window system to reduced glazing area if required
- G Traditional fully retractable canopy, if required, in blind box incorporated into the shopfront
- H Modern shopfront including stall risers and level threshold
- I Separate and clearly defined upper floor entrance
- J Consideration to be given to street numbering position
- K Projecting signs to be located within the fascia of equal height and projection.
- L Modern signage
- M Distinct separation between top of sign and cill
- N Security glazing with internally installed open mesh security shutters
- Lighting - internally illuminated fascia signs and projecting signs

# Picton Arcade Entrance

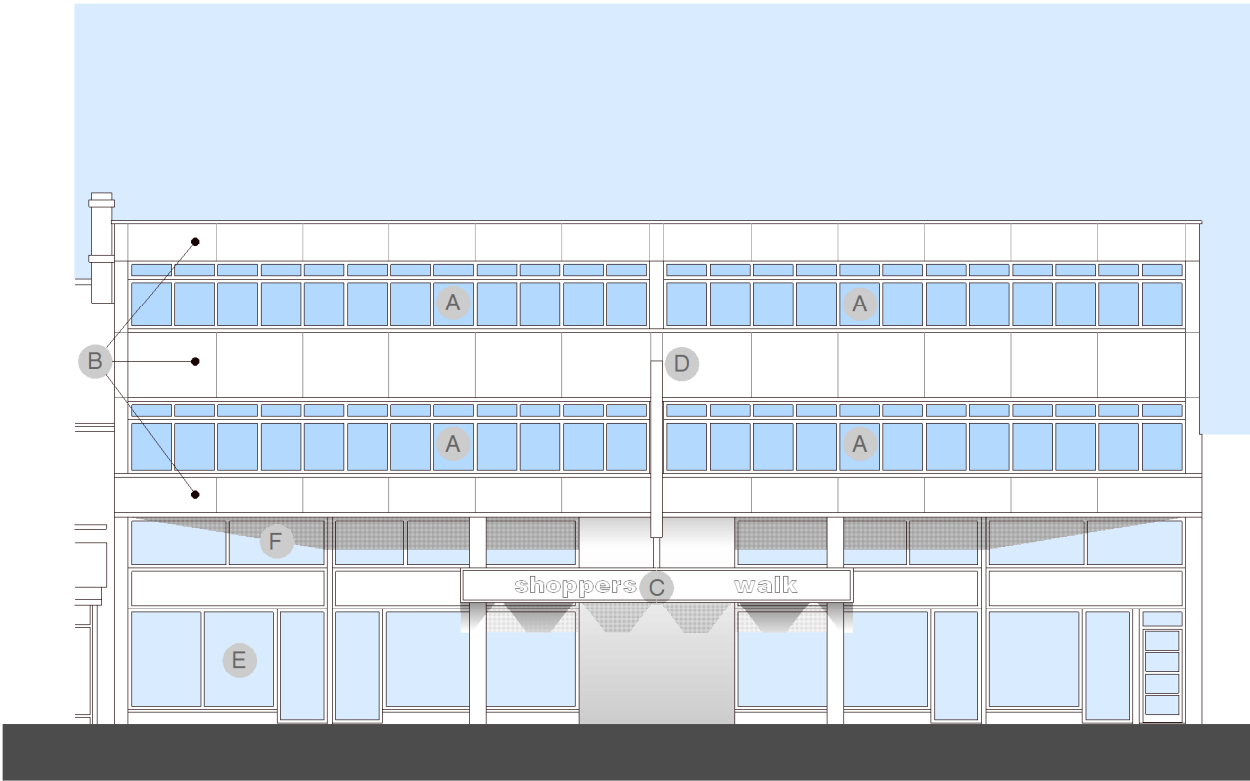


## Guidance

- The entrance to Picton Arcade should be made more prominent
- A Raised parapet wall above entrance, various possible shapes and profiles
- B Proprietary canopy on framework incorporating signage and downlighting
- C Projecting 3D motif, sail or signage either internally or externally lit, opportunity for strong colours, dramatic lighting
- D Similar shopfronts to either side will reinforce the entrance by symmetry
- E Simplified shopfronts possible by locating entrances from within arcade.
- Modern materials : powder coated aluminium, stainless steel, opportunity for strong colours
- Opportunity for full first floor infill development



# Shoppers Walk Arcade Entrance



## Guidance

- The entrance to Shoppers Walk should be made more prominent
- A Windows replaced
- B Flat metal faced insulated over cladding
- C Projecting canopy encased incorporating signage and downlighters
- D Projecting motif , 3D form, sail or signage either internally or externally lit.
- E Maximise glazing to shopfronts
- F High level glazing to illuminate concrete soffit
- Modern materials : powder coated aluminium, stainless steel, opportunity for strong colours



# Plymouth Street & Oxford Street Junction



## Guidance

- Reinstated solid first floor facade
- Consideration of false windows and framing
- Suitable location for 3D sculptured advertising motif
- Enlarge height of fascias
- Modern shopfronts
- Wide range of materials could be appropriate
- Opportunity for strong colours
- Development opportunity by the addition of first floor and reinstatement of roof line



# 06 Acknowledgments and Further Information

## Acknowledgements

The preparation of this document has been undertaken by Dewi Evans Architects in consultation with the following:

- City & County of Swansea – Regeneration / Housing & Environment Departments
- Welsh Assembly Government – Department for the Economy and Transport

## Further Information

### Building Enhancement Programme (BEP) Improvement Grants

To determine eligibility for grant support:

[www.swansea.gov.uk/planning](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/planning)

Tel: 01792 637270

### Planning Approvals

- Planning Permission

In general, alterations or replacements to shopfronts will normally require planning permission and alterations affecting the character of listed buildings are likely to require Listed Building Consent. Planning permission is required for any material change in the external appearance of a shop. This could include altering the glazing, changing facing materials, installing blinds or shutters, enlarging or changing a fascia. The list is not exhaustive and in each case the Planning Department should be contacted for advice prior to any works commencing. Relevant planning applications will be judged against Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted by the City and County of Swansea on shopfront design.

- Listed Building Consents and Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural interest and stringent controls are in place to protect buildings within these areas.

Any alteration affecting a listed building will require Listed Building Consent. This can include re-painting a shopfront in a different colour, installing a security alarm, blinds or shutters, altering the shop interior, installing advertisements or altering the locations, sizes etc of any of the above which would change the current character of the building.

- Advertisement Consent

Advertisement Consent is required for illuminated signs or fascias, projecting signs and extra large signs above ground floor level. Detailed guidance is available in the 'Outdoor Advertisements and Signs' leaflet produced by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

[www.swansea.gov.uk/planning](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/planning)

Tel: 01792 635701

## Building Control

Building Regulations Approval is required for new shopfronts when any alterations affect the building's structural stability, means of escape or the position of the entrance approach and or doorway.

[www.swansea.gov.uk/bcon](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/bcon)

Tel: 01792 635636

## Environmental Health

Issues become relevant particularly when a change of use is made. For example changing a retail unit to a coffee shop where food is handled.

[www.swansea.gov.uk](http://www.swansea.gov.uk)

Tel: 01792 635600

## Highways: Licensed Seating

There are issues concerning the use of the street, pavement or pedestrian area in front of a shop by the addition of tables and chairs. Advice should be taken from the Highway Licensing section. A guidance leaflet regarding tables and chairs can be obtained from the Highway Licensing section.

[www.swansea.gov.uk/transportandstreets](http://www.swansea.gov.uk/transportandstreets)

Tel: 01792 841673

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