



The Shopfronts of Lowestoft High Street, Suffolk Research and Investigation

Katie Carmichael

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SUMMARY

This report forms part of the broader Historic England contribution to the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme. It examines the shopfronts of Lowestoft High Street, describing the style and likely date of surviving examples and discussing lost examples seen in archived plans and images.

The elements which combine to form most historic shopfronts are discussed, as are the requirements of specialist shops. The styles and features most characteristic of different eras of shopfront design are explored and the shopfronts of Lowestoft High Street are examined with a view to ascribing a date based on these attributes. Extant examples (or elements thereof) of shopfronts on Lowestoft High Street range in date from c.1840 to the present day.

CONTRIBUTORS

Fieldwork, research and report writing was carried out by Katie Carmichael. Kathryn Morrison provided guidance and both she and Emily Cole read and provided comments on the text. Photography by Patricia Payne, Katie Carmichael and Edward James. The report was prepared for publication by Katie Carmichael.

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ARCHIVE LOCATION

Historic England Archive, The Engine House, Firefly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH

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INTRODUCTION

This report forms part of the broader Historic England contribution to the North Lowestoft Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) programme. It sets out to record and analyse the surviving historic shopfronts of Lowestoft's High Street, part of the North Lowestoft Conservation Area. Investigation and research was carried out at level 1 as defined in Historic England's *Understanding Place, Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice*. Outline assessments were restricted to the ground-floor shop frontages of the High Street, with limited further research to place Lowestoft's shops within the regional context. Only those buildings which are known to have once been shops, or have a surviving shopfront, have been considered within this report. Other types of commercial premises, such as public houses or offices, are generally not included. A history of the development of Lowestoft's High Street is also beyond the scope of this narrative but a brief summary can be found in the *North Lowestoft Conservation Area Character Appraisal*.¹

Lowestoft's High Street is distinct from the primary shopping frontage on London Road and is largely dominated by independent and specialist retailers providing day-to-day provision to the surrounding residential properties as well the wider population and visitors to the area. Footfall on the High Street is lower than on London Road and, despite lying within a Conservation Area, a number of properties on the High Street have suffered from a lack of maintenance and investment, inappropriate alterations (such as the insertion of uPVC doors and windows and illuminated signage) and the removal or concealment of historic features.

Historically, the north end of the High Street was largely residential and a number of early properties were demolished or destroyed by bombing in the 19th and 20th centuries. The southern end of the High Street is more complete and commercial in nature. Lowestoft's High Street runs north-south and is numbered consecutively. The east side of the High Street runs continuously – with the exception of 5 to 25 inclusive, which were demolished following bomb damage in the Second World War – from 2 High Street in the north to 108 High Street in the south. The west side of the High Street begins with 113 in the south and ends with 176 High Street in the north but has several gaps: numbers 124-126, 146, 153-158 and 164-166 have all been demolished (in large part due to the widening of the High Street in the 1880s and 1890s). Numbers 109-112 at the far south of the High Street were lost when Artillery Way was constructed in the 1990s. However, reference to properties in the south of the High Street is complicated by the fact that they were renumbered, so historic plans and directories may refer to 109 High Street, but today that property is 117 High Street – both numbers will be given (where known) when historic sources are referred to, but otherwise the post-war numbering will be used, as seen in Figures 1-4.

A detailed history of the development of shops from their market origins to the present day has been published by K. A. Morrison in *English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History* (2003) and only a summary of the features relevant to the shops of Lowestoft High Street will be discussed here. Lowestoft's shopfronts broadly fit within the national timeline of the evolution of shops and specific local examples and details will be used to illustrate these developments.

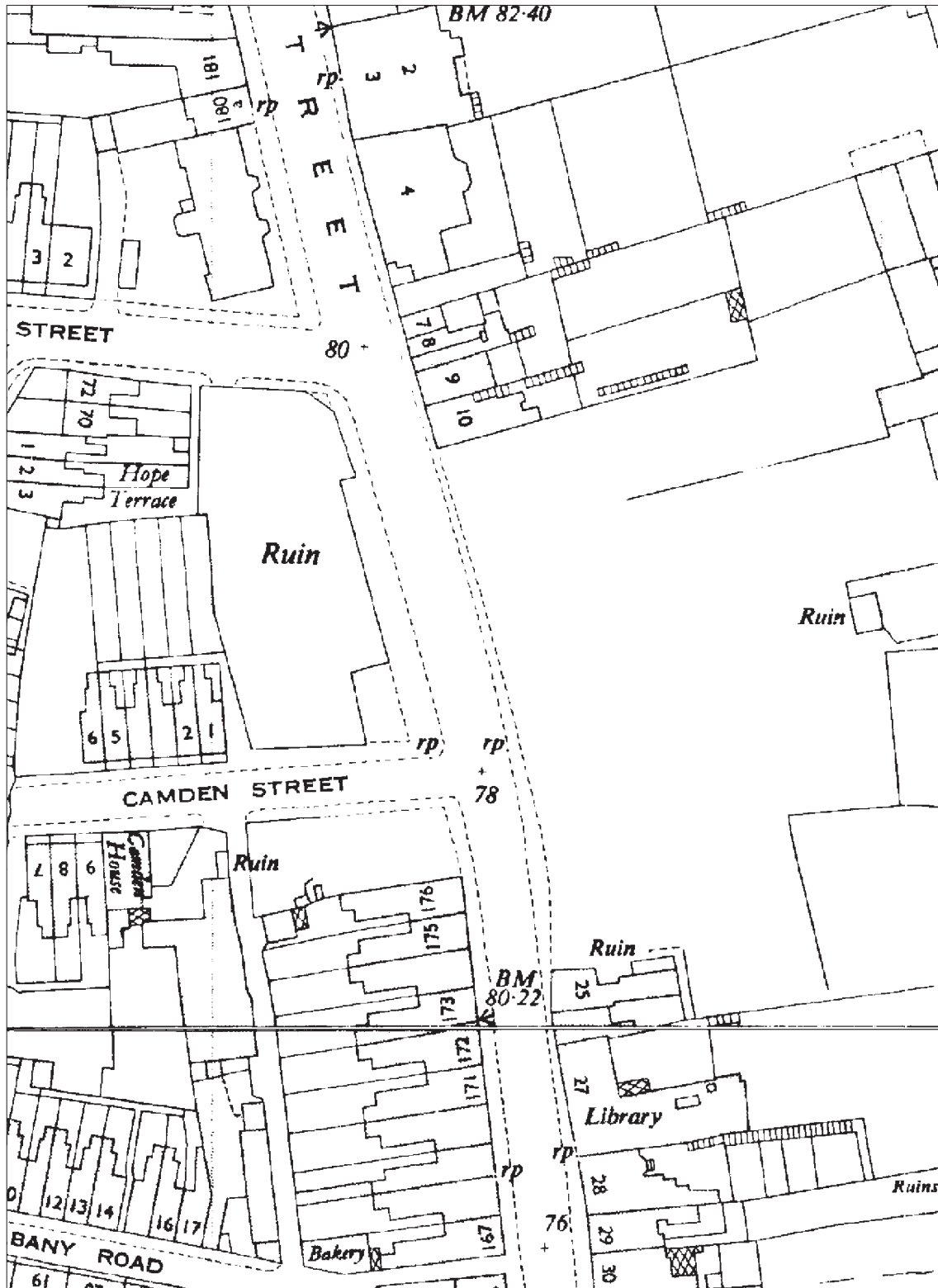


Figure 1. 1:250 Ordnance Survey map published 1950, showing the northern end of the High Street.
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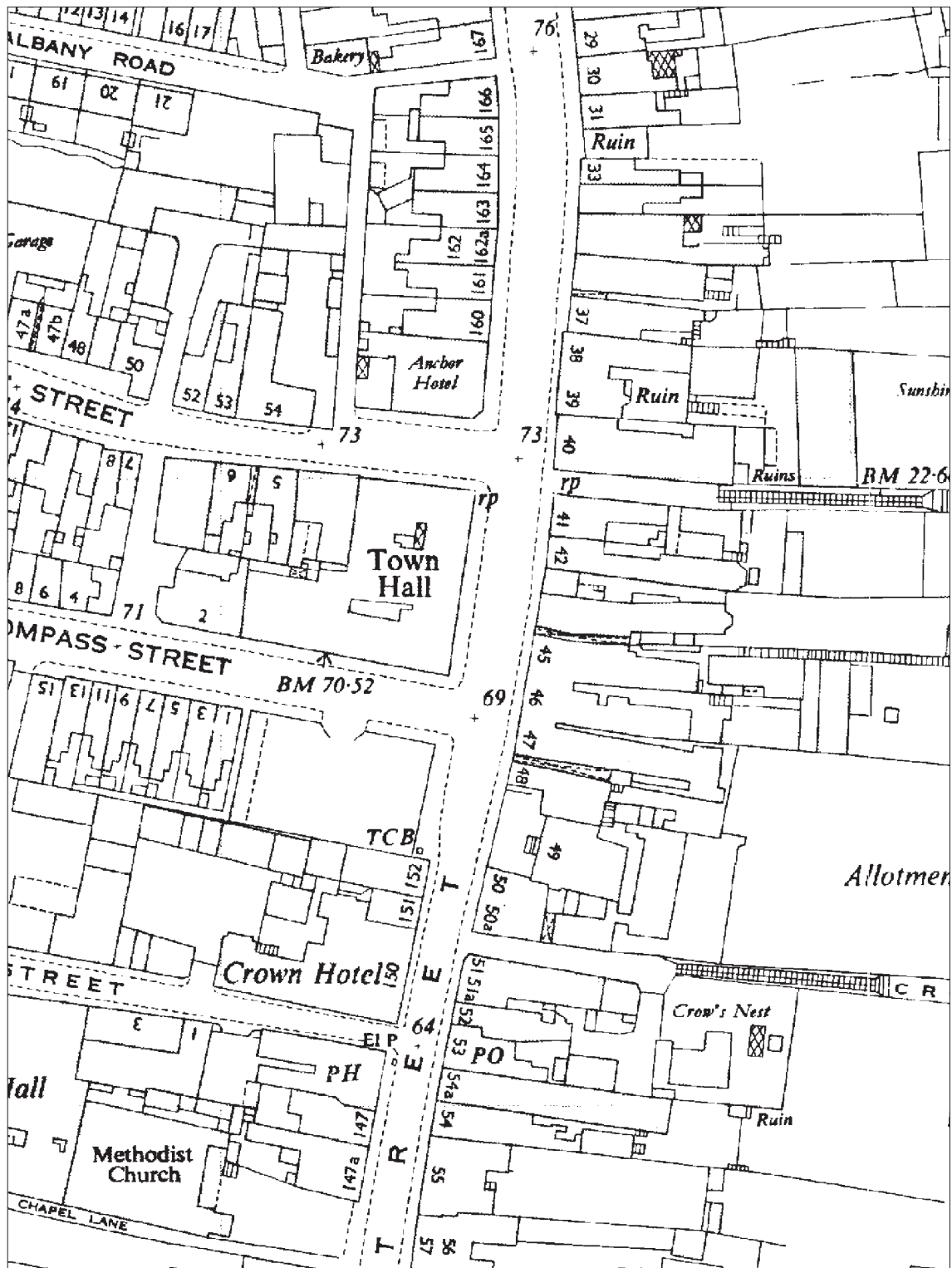


Figure 2. 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map published 1950, showing the northern central section of the High Street. © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2019). Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

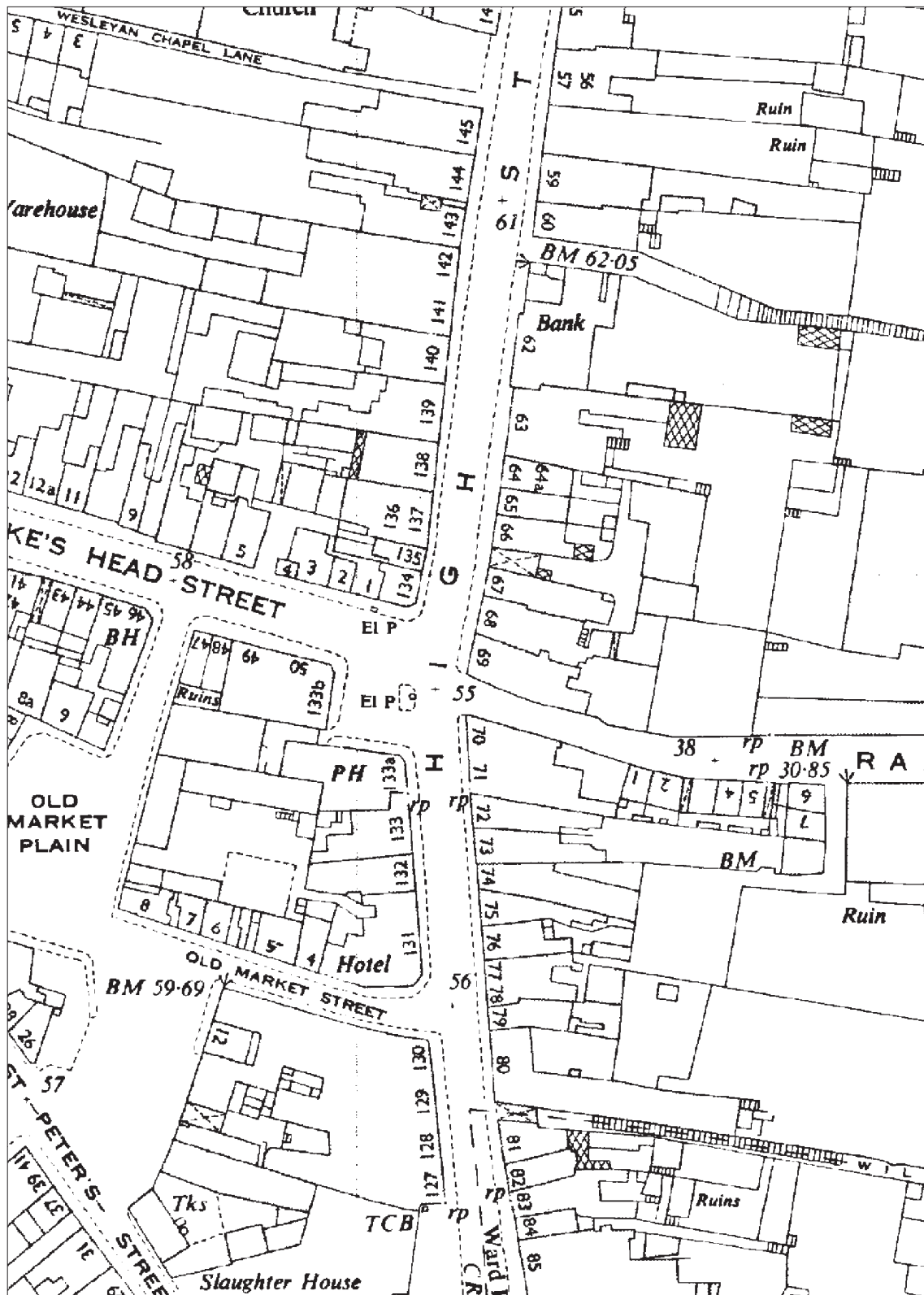


Figure 3. 1:250 Ordnance Survey map published 1950, showing the southern central section of the High Street. © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2019). Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

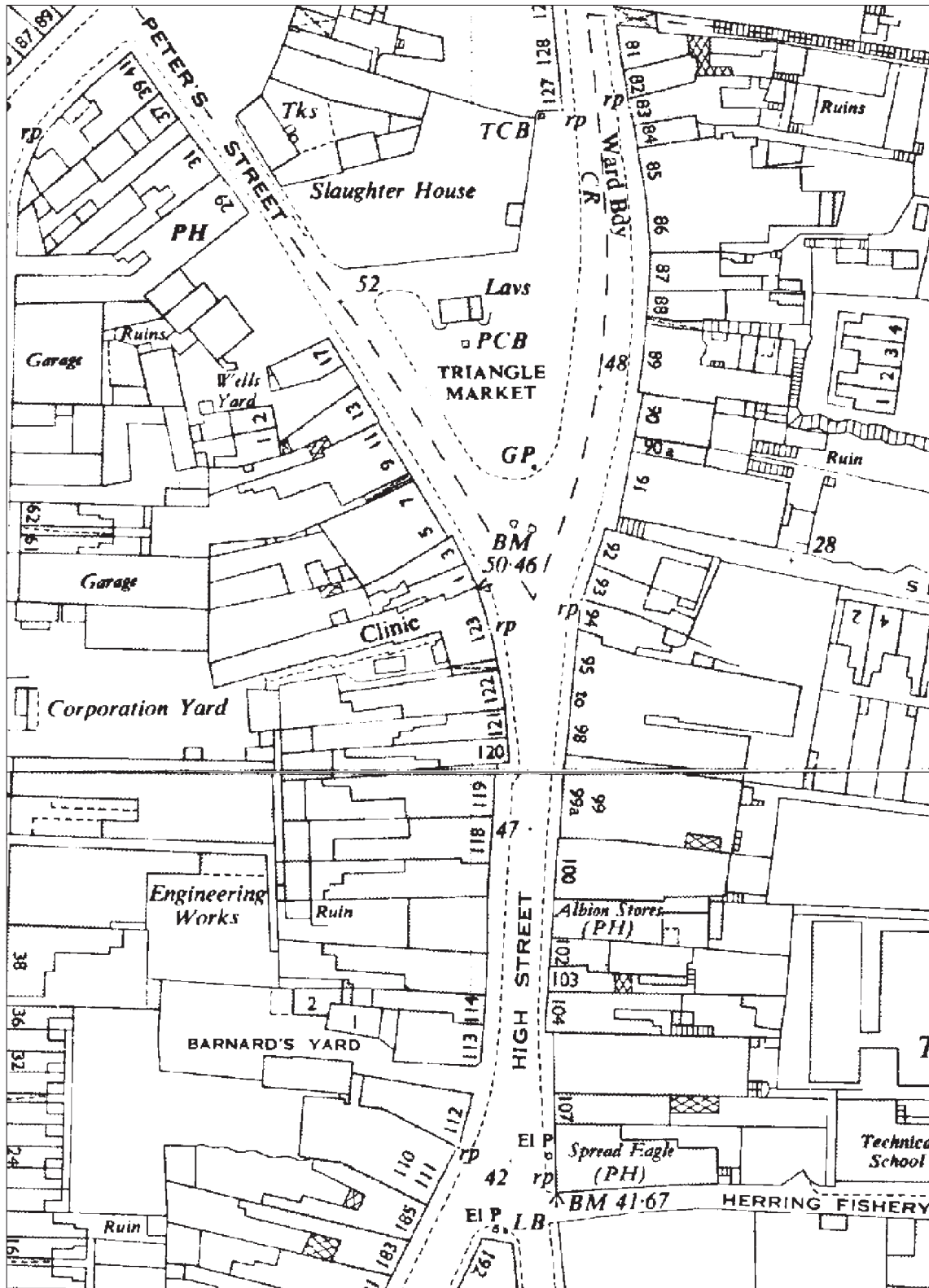


Figure 4. 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map published 1950, showing the southern end of the High Street prior to the construction of Artillery Way. © and database right Crown Copyright and Landmark information Group Ltd (All rights reserved 2019). Licence numbers 000394 and TP0024

Elements of a shopfront

A shopfront consists of a number of individual elements. These details vary over time and are important in their own right as well as for the overall impression they help to create. Figure 5 shows the most common components of a traditional post-Georgian shopfront. Features to consider when looking at a shopfront include:

- The fascia – the fixed horizontal board or signboard used to display the name of the business. Fascias run the full width of the shopfront, over any doors and windows, often terminating in consoles and topped by a cornice. They were narrow in the 18th and early 19th centuries and became deeper in the later 19th and early 20th centuries, whilst inter-war shops may lack a defined fascia altogether.
- The cornice – these project beyond fascias and usually have a lead covering to protect them from rain. They frame the top of the shopfront, separating it from the rest of the building above, and are generally moulded or dentilled. Inter-war shopfronts favoured a simple, flush design and often omitted cornices.
- Consoles – these frame the fascia board and, with pilasters, create a distinct demarcation between shops. Almost invariably classical in style, they may be simple or the most decorative element of the entire shopfront and generally became increasingly elaborate throughout the 19th century.
- Pilasters – these normally project slightly and serve to frame the shopfront but are usually decorative rather than structural. Pilasters are sometimes plain but vertical fluting or geometric details are common.
- Stallrisers – a feature which acts to raise the base of a window, sometimes allowing for ventilation to cellars below, and also helps to balance the overall design of a shopfront. Stallrisers are finished in a variety of materials, including

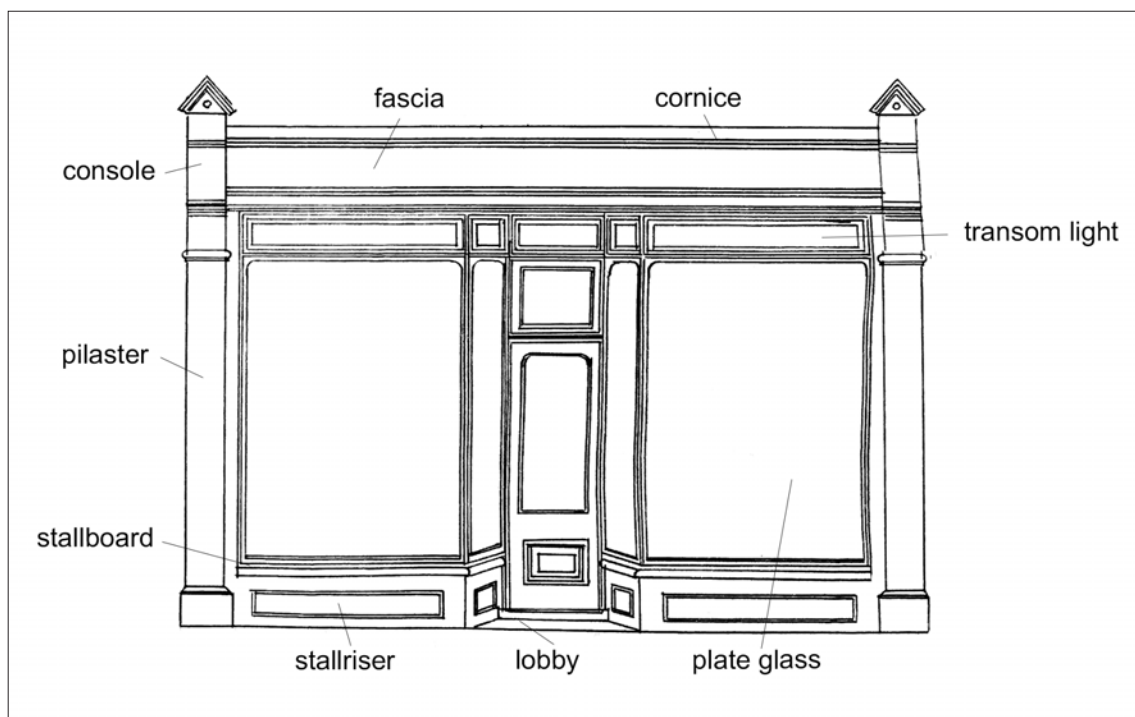


Figure 5. Elements of a typical late 19th –early 20th-century shopfront. Based on a design for an unidentified shop in Lowestoft by F.W. Richards in 1902 (SROL: 2444/3). © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

panelling, tiles, marble, granite, render, paint and ironwork. The finish and the height of the stallriser generally relates to the goods sold – larger items require low stallrisers and large windows, whilst smaller or consumable items are best displayed at a convenient height for examination.

- Stallboards – an angled piece of timber between the base of a display window and the stallriser, often used for signage.
- The lobby – the recessed area in front of the entrance door, often with a decorative tiled floor. Lobbies can be rectangular, square, splayed or curved, and the sides may be panelled or tiled but are commonly formed by the return of the display window(s) and could be closed by gates out of hours. The ceiling of the lobby is referred to as the soffit – generally panelled, such ceilings are occasionally mirrored or glazed and backlit (Figures 6 and 7).



Figure 6. A mirrored soffit at 10-11 Regent Street, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael



Figure 7. Detail of the stained glass and backlit soffit at Twyford House, 5-7 Exchange Square, Beccles, Suffolk. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

- Fanlights – windows above shop doors are typically rectangular within a timber frame and sometimes hinged at the bottom to open inwards for ventilation. The glass may be plain, etched or stained according to the overall glazing scheme of the shop.
- Windows – from the mid-19th century onwards display windows were often framed with large panes of plate glass. Arcaded windows with arched heads separated by colonettes and decorative spandrels (see Figure 70, 70-71 High Street) were introduced in the 1840s and reached a peak in the 1860s, only to be replaced by horizontal or rectilinear transom lights in the 1870s. Curved returns to display windows became increasingly popular in the early 20th century (see Figure 121, 118 High Street). Butchers, fishmongers and grocers were the exception – they adopted wide sash windows in the Georgian period and continued to use them until the 1950s.
- Signs and lettering – signage was generally concentrated on fascias and stallboards. Early shopfronts relied on hand-painted lettering and local signwriters often had their own distinctive style (see Figure 32, 38-40 High

Street). In the later 19th century shadow-lettering and gilding became more common, but the method of choice for high-class shops at the turn of the 20th century was for deeply incised V-cut letters which were then gilded before being covered by glass (see Figure 158, 149 High Street). Alternatively, applied letters made from timber or metal could be used and sans-serif fonts became increasingly popular in the inter-war period.

- Blinds and awnings offered protection for goods and shoppers and could be hidden away when not required. As well as sheltering customers from rain, when a shopfront faced the sun they helped to shade the window display, reducing light damage to goods and helping to keep the shop cool. Blind boxes were often an integral part of the shopfront and were faced by a timber blind rail (occasionally bronze or chrome); the retractable blind inside was fixed to a sprung roller and could be pulled out using a hook inserted into an eyelet. The commonest manufacturer was J. Dean of Putney (Figure 8). Blinds were generally supported by metal crank arms and storm chains helped to prevent lateral movement. Even where blind boxes have been removed, the fixing points for the arms and chains often survive.



Figure 8. Blind boxes and rails by J. Dean of Putney can be found all across the country. Founded in 1894, the company is still trading today.

© Historic England, Katie Carmichael

- Shutters – security has always been important and early shops had heavy removable wooden shutters (Figure 9). Where these have gone, shutter rebates or fixings may survive. Integral roller shutters with timber slats were another option, rolling up into a box hidden behind the fascia or down into the basement (see Figure 172). Similarly, shop gates became increasingly common as lobbies increased in size during the late Victorian and Edwardian periods – made from timber or iron, they were typically lifted into place at night (Figure 10).

Figure 9. The shopfront of 8 Market Row, Great Yarmouth, is remarkable not only for its surviving set of shutters, but also for being installed in its present location in c.1996 after it was saved from demolition on Howard Street in the 1960s and kept in storage for many years. The windows behind the shutters have interlocking ogee arched heads forming a transom band. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael



- Ventilation – this could be provided through ventilation grilles in the stallriser, ventilators above the windows, and hopper fanlights over doors. Ventilators were narrow strips made from pierced timber or metal and could be highly decorative (see Figure 76, 74 High St), often incorporating ‘hit and miss’ sliders which allowed the air flow to be controlled. Butchers and fishmongers sometimes had open stallrisers and fanlights protected only by a grille.



Figure 10. The lobby of 115 High Street, showing the mosaic floor of c.1930. The small holes in the foreground show where a shop gate was fitted out of hours. © Historic England DP236883

Specialist shops

Certain classes of shops had specific requirements and styles which were not necessarily adopted by other retailers. The shopfronts of fishmongers, grocers, jewellers, chemists and shoe retailers, for instance, were less susceptible to changing fashions and were readily distinctive from other trades.

Consumable goods sold by butchers, grocers, fishmongers and dairymen necessitated different provisions for display and sale than were required for non-perishable items. These businesses first made use of wide double-hung sash windows in the mid-18th century and continued with that arrangement until new regulations in the 1950s brought the practice to an end. The lower sash was normally fitted with large brass handles and was pushed up behind the upper sash to create an open shopfront in which produce could be displayed, with sales made through the window. Marble slabs helped to keep produce cool, and a veneer of marble, tile or polished granite on the stallriser below made it easier to clean. In the late Victorian period this cladding was extended to include the pilasters, and the stallriser was often decorated with the name of the business, swags or cornucopia.² Late 19th-century grocers and provision merchants also made use of ‘hygienic’ glazed bricks to cover their stallrisers and pilasters, typically in oxblood red or dark green, but had standard plate-glass windows unless one side of the shop sold dairy and the other dry goods, in which case the shop might have one sash window and one fixed (Figure 11).

Chemists in the Georgian period used small window panes to frame individual jars or bottles which sat on narrow shelves hidden by the horizontal glazing bars. As



Figure 11. A former International Tea Company shopfront at 18 Queen Street, Southwold, Suffolk. The layout of a sash window to one side of the entrance and fixed glazing to the other was a particular feature of chain grocers' stores. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

windows became larger during the 19th century this practice persisted, but several shelves became one broader shelf which displayed carboys filled with coloured liquid, backlit for maximum effect; consequently this shelf became known as a carboy shelf. The facing edges of carboy shelves were habitually disguised by a lettered strip on the shopfront which often had a gilt background and letters picked out in black.³ This style of shopfront survived relatively unchanged until the post-war period, when a typical (and far less distinctive) design of a metal-framed plate-glass window set within a marble surround emerged. The best surviving example of a pre-war chemist's shopfront on Lowestoft High Street is at number 59, which has been the subject of a standalone report: K. A. Morrison: *Former Chemist's Shop, 59-59a High Street, Lowestoft: Research and Investigation*.

Jewellers emerged as a distinct shop type following the introduction of arcaded plate-glass shopfronts in London in the 1850s and 1860s, and by the end of the century it was common to find ornate hardwood shopfronts with well-lit arch-headed windows, high stallboards and stallrisers, decorative glass and deep arcaded lobbies to allow for more display space. Many jewellers advertised their presence by affixing a clock of their own design above the shopfront, visually projecting out into the street.⁴

Shoe shops favoured deep display lobbies and free-standing island showcases,

often located in the centre of the lobby, or the corner if it was a corner plot. Also popular for clothiers and outfitters, island showcases were especially popular between c.1900 and 1939 and allowed small items to be more easily perused by window-shoppers. Deep lobbies with display windows connected in the form of an arcade (but not necessarily with the arched heads of a 'true' arcade) were generally considered to make poor use of the available retail space and were replaced, making surviving examples reasonably rare.⁵ From the 1950s onwards 'arcade' fronts on shoe shops were replaced with wide, deep lobbies with open-backed windows which allowed shoppers to see through into the shop beyond.⁶

SHOPFRONTS BY DATE

It is often difficult to be precise when dating a shopfront. Completely unaltered, 'as-built' shopfronts are rare and most have undergone a series of alterations as fashions, fortunes and requirements have changed. Earlier surviving elements may be hidden behind later additions or otherwise disguised, and many styles and elements remained popular for a long period of time. It is also possible for a shopfront to be older than the building of which it forms part – when a business closed, it was not uncommon for the shopfront to be sold as an entity and moved elsewhere (see Figure 9). For example, one advert in the *Lowestoft Journal* in 1887 reads simply 'Plate glass shop front and fittings for sale',⁷ whilst another from 1898 states:

Shop window fittings by the best makers, ready now, first-class condition; everything complete; Mirrors, Glass Shelves, Standards &c; also the first-class Shop Front, in perfect order, together or separately, for sale, a bargain. "A.S" Journal Offices, Lowestoft.⁸

Individual elements of shopfronts changed over time with the introduction of new styles and materials and each era can be characterised by a number of design principles and characteristics. Taken individually or, ideally, as a whole, these remain the best way to date a shopfront where other sources are lacking.

Georgian (1714-1837)

Shopfronts of the 18th century are difficult to date, as they were simple and mainly characterised by the use of small panes of crown glass in a projecting frame with thick ovolo moulded bars. One of the earliest surviving bow-fronted shopfronts in the country is believed to date from 1754.⁹ Whilst many of the buildings on Lowestoft's High Street date from the 16th century onwards, the predominant appearance is Victorian, and many buildings have clearly been refaced. No Georgian shopfronts survive, but a view of the High Street drawn by R. Powles in 1784 gives us an idea as to its appearance at this time (Figure 12). The drawing shows a High Street dominated by multi-paned bay windows – a simple and popular form of shopfront which projected into the street and maximised display space. On the far left of the illustration is 38 High Street, a tall three-storey building with a chimney stack on the gable wall; this was generally known as the Sea View Temperance Hotel from 1877 until its demolition in 1957 (Figure 13). At the centre of the image is a view down Crown Score, to the immediate left of which is 50 High Street; this is clearly recognisable in its massing and general shape, the number of windows and the position of the chimney stacks. The most notable differences between the depiction of 50 High Street and the building we see today (see Figure 44) is the bowed Georgian shopfront, railings and the presence of a roof lantern. The double bow window with central doorway appears to have been similar in style to that still surviving at 34 Haymarket, London, which is believed to date from the mid-18th century (Figure 14). Whilst bow-window shopfronts were popular elsewhere, Powles' illustration shows that Lowestoft's High Street was dominated by flat or square bay windows – apparently a regional preference, as Great Yarmouth also



Figure 12. Perspective view of Lowestoft High Street by R. Powles, 1786, looking east down Crown Score and showing the lost Georgian shopfronts of the thoroughfare. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 193/2/1/5



Figure 13. The demolition in 1957 of 38 High Street, a distinctive three-storey 18th-century building. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1300/72/41/34



Figure 14. 34 Haymarket, London. Occupied from 1754 until 1982 by the tobacconists Fribourg and Treyer, it is a good example of a mid-18th-century double-bow shopfront. © Historic England AA60/02974 (detail)

favoured cheaper square or flat windows over expensive bowed shopfronts.

Despite what appears to be some artistic licence in the depiction of both 49 (to the left of number 50) and 55 High Street (the house at the centre of the buildings to the right of Crown Score, with pilasters rising from the central doorway to a pediment above), it may be assumed with some confidence that much of what Powles drew

was fairly accurate – especially given that the general rhythm, number and width of the plots is correct. It is possible that limited evidence of these shopfronts may be found during renovation work, but as yet there is no known trace.

A number of towns and cities restricted the projection of bow fronts – for instance, the London Building Act of 1774 restricted them to a maximum of 10 inches on streets 30 feet wide, and just 5 inches on narrower streets. Where London led provincial towns soon followed, and given Lowestoft High Street’s approximate width of just 19 feet prior to the widening of the northern part in the late 19th century, it may be the case that restrictions were imposed in the town which led to the loss of the Georgian shopfronts.

Victorian (1837-1901)

Shopfronts of the 1830s and 1840s favoured classical designs with columns and full entablatures (Figure 15), but this quickly gave way to simple pilasters and fascias terminating in consoles, resulting in the characteristic framework of shopfronts with which we are so familiar today. Early Victorian shopfronts are characterised by the slenderness of their pilasters and fascias, features which became more prominent over time. The introduction of increasingly affordable sheet and plate glass from the mid-19th century onwards was perhaps the largest single influence on the appearance of shopfronts during this period.

The Italianate style was first used for shopfronts in the 1840s and was characterised by tall, elegant arched windows.¹⁰ These arched window panes became taller and narrower in the 1850s and 1860s, and plain glazing bars were replaced by colonettes with stylised capitals and bases, often in conjunction with decorative carved spandrels (Figure 16). The increased adoption of interior gas lamps in the 1870s to illuminate window displays at night had two consequences for shopfronts:



Figure 15 (left). 6 Hall Quay, Great Yarmouth. A classical shopfront of c.1830-40 with Ionic columns – the oldest known surviving example in the region. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Figure 16 (below). A carved timber spandrel and delicate colonette with decorative capital at 2 Sheepgate, Beccles. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael



one was the introduction of transom lights (often fitted with decorative glass), which helped to mask the light fittings without blocking out daylight; the second was that the heat from the lamps made ventilators above the transom lights almost essential.

Shopfronts designed between c.1850 and 1900 were created at a time of increased competition, where the ability to stand out was a commercial advantage. Shopfronts of this date are characterised by:

- Deeper fascias which are usually made from timber.
- Moulded cornices.
- Console brackets – early examples are fairly restrained and classical but these become more elaborate over time.
- Large plate-glass windows, arcaded styles being popular in the 1860s (e.g. 70-71 and 124 High Street).
- Deep astragal-and-hollow moulded glazing bars.
- Transom lights and ventilator strips from the 1870s onwards.
- Integral roller blinds.
- Square lobbies in the mid-19th century, splayed by the end of the century, with mosaic or encaustic tile floors.
- Pilasters which can be plain, fluted or have geometric detailing.
- Cast iron decorative pillars, especially in examples from the 1880s and 1890s (e.g. 36 High Street), which may be structural.
- V-cut, gilded and glazed 'brilliant' shop signs in the late Victorian period (e.g. 149 and 172 High Street).

Edwardian (1901-1914)

The extended Edwardian period saw a greater choice of styles in shopfront design, with the Queen Anne Revival, Neo-Georgian and Art Nouveau styles emerging.¹¹ Shopfronts from this period were usually very well made with high-quality materials. They were built to the same basic designs as the Victorian period (see Figure 18) but were characterised by additional details and changes in materials such as:

- The use of high-quality exotic hardwoods such as mahogany and teak.
- Brass fittings on the doors and windows (e.g. 132 High Street).
- Tall plate-glass windows with slender colonettes, carved spandrels and curved glass returns (e.g. 118 High Street).
- Leaded windows with bulls-eye or stained glass (e.g. 133 High Street)
- Flowing plant forms (for example on door handles), influenced by the Art Nouveau movement (e.g. 73 High Street).
- Increasingly deep lobbies, often with the name of the business set within a mosaic floor.
- Soffits panelled or decorated with plasterwork or mirror glass (see Figure 6).

Inter-War (1918-1939)

The inter-war years saw a shift away from traditional designs and materials in shopfronts towards modern, minimalist designs and the introduction of:

- Simple and stylised console brackets, where these were included at all.

- Smooth and polished materials such as Vitrolite, granite, marble and faience (e.g. 64 High Street).
- Geometric details within transom lights and margin panes.
- Bronze and chrome fittings (e.g. 144 High Street).
- The increasing use of curved glass for the main windows and etched glass for transom lights (e.g. 118 High Street).
- ‘Arcaded’ entrances for shoe shops and drapers (e.g. 136 and 137 High Street).
- Marble and terrazzo lobby floors, often incorporating geometric designs.
- Sans-serif lettering or neon-lit signs.

Post-War (1945-c.1970)

The post-war period saw a continued move away from the traditional shopfronts of the Victorian period towards simpler designs which made full use of modern materials. Shopfronts of the 1950s were often asymmetrically splayed – a device which funnelled window-shoppers towards the entrance. Shopfronts from the post-war years are often similar in style to those from the inter-war period, favouring simplicity and flexibility of use. Characteristics include:

- Continued use of Vitrolite, marble, faience and terrazzo as well as glass blocks (e.g. 145 High Street).
- Angled shopfronts with an offset or side door (e.g. 58 High Street).
- Small mosaic tiles, often grey or blue, on façades and stallrisers.
- ‘Crazy paving’ for lobby floors.
- Slatted hardwood fascias.
- Salient (projecting) surrounds to otherwise flat windows (e.g. 85-86 High Street, and 100 High Street).

Modern (c.1970 to present)

‘Traditional’ style modern shopfronts tend to be made from stained softwood with poorly proportioned mouldings. Attention to detail and finishes is often lacking, and applied signage is overly dominant. Conversely, contemporary style shopfront designs are characterised by the use of structural glass, often with minimal externally applied signage. Other features include:

- Increased use of plastic and aluminium from the 1970s onwards (e.g. 135 High Street).
- Oversized lettering on deep fascias and simplified classical details in poor-quality materials for ‘traditional’ styles (e.g. 151-152 High Street).
- The omission of lobbies.
- Toughened-glass forming apparently frameless ‘walls’ for minimalist styles.

SHOPFRONTS OF LOWESTOFT HIGH STREET

Whilst most historic shopfronts have been altered over the years and many have been replaced with modern designs, others have been lost in their entirety and are now in other commercial or domestic use. All known information relating to the style and date of shopfronts on Lowestoft's High Street, lost or extant, is included here.

East Side

Numbers 5 to 25 High Street were bombed on the 12th May 1943 and subsequently demolished. Figure 17 shows the eastern side of the High Street looking north in c.1890. Most of the properties seen were primarily residential, including the tall Rectory at 13 High Street. The only shopfronts visible are that of A. Crisp & Son on the right (22 High Street) and glimpses of another opposite. Number 22 High Street has a suggested date of c.1840, given the cornice and blind box without a fascia or consoles and multi-paned window supported by a waist-height panelled stallriser. Trade directory entries reveal that George Crisp, bookseller and stationer, was trading from the address by 1844.¹² The cornice of another early Victorian shopfront is just visible on the left of the photo and appears to have belonged to 177 High Street – demolished for the widening of the High Street in the 1890s, presumably not long after this photo was taken and possibly even in progress given the derelict condition of number 176. In the immediate foreground is the Evening Star public house.



Figure 17. View looking north up the High Street with A. Crisp & Sons' shop at 22 High Street on the right, beyond the Evening Star pub. The photo was taken in c.1890, shortly before the widening of the northern section of the High Street. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1828/3/1/15

A set of plans from 1902 by F. W. Richards (Figure 18) is described in the archive catalogue as :‘Probably No 25 High Street, Lowestoft, built for G. Parr, picture frame maker [see Dictionary of Suffolk Architects, page 165 - Ref WDC L.2809]’. However, nothing on the designs suggests who the client was, nor do the details or scale of the building shown match with what we know of 25 High Street. The 1902 plans are therefore probably for another property in Lowestoft – although the details of the frame mouldings and construction are of interest as dated examples. The WDC L2809 plans referred to in the archive catalogue are again by F. W. Richards and date from 1903 but are clearly not of 25 High Street (Figure 19). Designed for A. Parr, these plans would be expected to show Parr's property at 172 High Street, but the two-storey building with attic cannot be the three-storey building with attic built in 1899 which we see today.



Figure 18. Plans by F. W. Richards, 1902 – previously misidentified as being for 25 High Street. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 2444/3 (detail)



Figure 19. Plans by F. W. Richards, 1903 – previously misidentified as being for 25 High Street. WDC L2809. Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council



Figure 20. Plans for a new shopfront at 25 and 26 High Street were drawn in 1903. SROL: 98/2722 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council

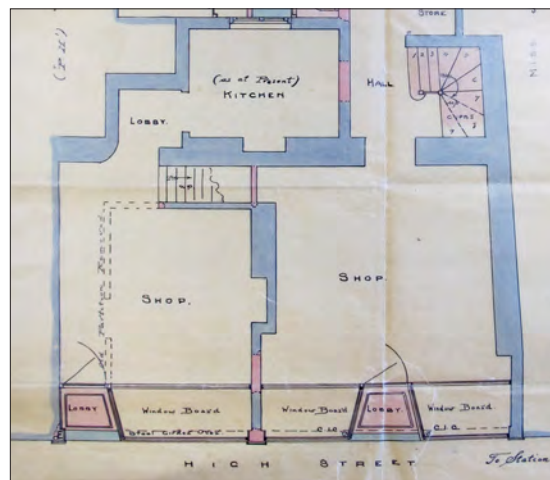


Figure 21. Submitted by Alfred Coe, the new designs for 25 and 26 High Street show that it was a refronting of an existing building. SROL: 98/2722 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council

Alfred Coe, builder and contractor, submitted plans in 1903 for new shopfronts at 25 and 26 High Street (Figures 20 and 21) with delicate vertical glazing bars and decorated spandrels, ventilator strips, decorative panelling and quite deep splayed lobbies. The discovery of a sign reading 'C. Parr & Son' at 172 High Street in 1982 (see Figure 164) is most logically explained as the rescue of the sign from 25 High Street following the bombing on 12th May 1943. The ornate gilding and lettering of the sign could well date to 1903 given the shopfront design seen in Coe's plan, which used elements generally associated with earlier designs.

The shop window of **31 High Street** looks, from a distance, to be potentially early Victorian (Figure 22). However, it is quickly apparent that the panes are too large and the glazing bars are too plainly moulded to be genuine. This is confirmed by



Figure 22. The early Victorian-style glazing of 31 High Street was installed in c.2002 and is set within an original Victorian framework. © Historic England DP247550



Figure 23. A photograph of 31 High Street taken in 1949, showing a late 19th-century plate-glass window with 20th-century brickwork above. © Historic England bb50/00216 (detail)

a photo (Figure 23) and the list description, both produced in 1949; these clearly show and describe a late 19th-century plate-glass window. Listed building consent and planning permission were granted in 2002 for the repair and alteration of the shopfront.¹³ More detailed analysis reveals that elements of an earlier shopfront do survive, however – the narrow pilasters with stylised Greek key design, the narrow fascia, simple cornice and the style of the panelling are all typical of c.1840 (Figure 24). The letterbox below the window, with opening panel to the side, is an unusual feature which appears to relate to the shop's function as a chemist's and druggist's (first recorded in 1838)¹⁴ – the letterbox allowed patients to post prescriptions out of hours, as the main letterbox in the door would probably have been inaccessible due to the presence of a shop gate. The shallow display case inside the lobby (Figure 25) probably dates to the late 19th century and would have been well suited for the display of small bottles and items, whilst the coloured encaustic tiles of the lobby floor are also late 19th-century in date.



Figure 24 (above). Victorian panelling and letterbox below the shop window of 31 High Street. The stylised Greek key design to the base of the narrow pilasters suggests a date of c.1840. © Historic England, DP247551



Figure 25. Late 19th-century encaustic tiles and a shallow display case within the lobby of 31 High Street. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael



Number **33 High Street** (Figure 26) is currently residential, but the ground-floor brickwork is clearly inserted whilst the window and doorcase are also modern (albeit designed sympathetically to match those above and at number 34). A photograph from 1949 (Figure 27) shows the lost shopfront – this had a shallow cornice without consoles, medium-sized panes of glass with a shallow splayed side lobby and a plain brick stallriser, which suggest a date of around 1840. By the time the property was listed in 1977 the shopfront had been removed and the present arrangement was in place.

Figure 26. Inserted ground-floor brickwork at 33 High Street (on the left) marks the position of a lost shopfront. © Historic England DP247552



Figure 27. 33 High Street in 1949, showing a lost shopfront of c.1840. © Historic England bb50/00217 (detail)

Number **36 High Street** is an unusual example of a late 19th-century shopfront set below the jetty of a grade II* listed 15th-century merchant's house (Figure 28). The central glazed double doors are flanked by cast-iron columns with a barleytwist design to the upper sections and Corinthian capitals. The display windows are three-over-one horned sash windows. The upper sash is fixed and the lower sash sits on a flat, deep stallboard. The low stallrisers are made from brick, as are the wide chamfered pilasters with modified Corinthian capitals which partially support a narrow boxed fascia. Wide and heavily moulded brackets rise from the pilasters to frame the coved underside of the jetty. Just visible above the tops of the upper sashes are what may be the base of integral roller shutters with timber slats (Figure 29); these line up with shutter grooves in the sides of the window frames and could explain the slightly awkward-looking boxed



Figure 28. 36 High Street. A late 19th-century shopfront with cast-iron columns set below the jetty of a 15th-century house. © Historic England DP247553



Figure 29. Wooden roller shutters appear to survive at 36 High Street – the base of a shutter is just visible above the window, set within shutter grooves. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

fascia. Known as the George & Dragon and then the Norwich Arms public house in the early 19th century, the property was taken over around 1877 by Mr Edward Money, a fruiterer, and remained in use as a greengrocer's under a succession of owners until the mid-20th century.¹⁵ The late 19th-century shopfront is consistent with its use as a grocer's shop, the windows opening to allow trade directly from the street.

Numbers **38-40 High Street** were built as a single block to replace the old Smith's Furnishing Stores buildings which were demolished in 1957 (see below). The plot stood empty for a number of years before the present building was constructed in the late 1960s (it is not on the 1962 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map, but is present on the 1972 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map). It was designed as a row of four shops with accommodation above (Figure 30). Whilst most of the windows and doors have been replaced, some of the original timber frames survive – particularly to the shallow display cases inside the lobbies (Figure 31), which appear to deliberately mirror that seen at 31 High Street. The shopfront of 38B appears to be original with its simple wooden frame, large plate-glass window and deep splayed lobby. Typically minimalist and flexible in style, the shopfronts are devoid of any fascias, pilasters, consoles or cornices. The stallrisers increase in height from north to south as they account for the natural slope of the land, and the shopfront of 40 High Street is angled to take advantage of its position on the corner of Mariner's Score.



Figure 30 (above). A late 1960s block of four shops with accommodation above at 38-40 High Street. © Historic England, DP247556

Figure 31 (right). 38B High Street, a plain shopfront with a simple wooden frame, large plate-glass window and deep splayed lobby with shallow display case. © Historic England, DP247558



Previously on this site was the Smith's Furnishing Stores, formed of 38, 39 and 40 High Street (Figure 32). Number 38 High Street appears to have been built in the 18th century as a residential property (see Figure 12), before being turned into

the Sea View Temperance Hotel by James Plant c.1877. Smith's was established as a pawnbrokers at 40 High Street in the mid-1860s and took over the former fish-dealer's premises at 39 in c.1889, before acquiring the hotel in c.1895 and expanding into the antiques business. Demolished in January 1957, 38 High Street displayed some fine late 19th-century painted signage in a variety of styles: simple light-coloured serif-font lettering on a plain board at parapet level ('Complete House Furnishers'); elaborate light-coloured shadow-lettering above the first-floor windows, painted across rendered window heads ('Antiques China Pictures'); dark-coloured lettering above the ground-floor windows in the same font as the parapet ('Smith's Furnishing Stores Ltd'); shadow-lettering to the fascia of the shopfront ('The Home Lovers' Store'); scrolls flanking the front door (one illegible, one inviting customers to view the extensive showrooms); and dark-coloured lettering across the southern gable wall and chimney stack declaring '38,39,40. Smith's. Complete House Furnisher. Goods bought sold or exchanged. Antiques Curios'. The small shopfront at the northern end of number 38 was unusual in having a full-width lobby with panelled sides but no cornice above the deep canted fascia and simple consoles – a date of c.1900 is suggested, but the pilasters were narrow and could have been older. Numbers 39 and 40 High Street were united with a single shopfront following the take-over of 39 by Smith's in c.1889, providing another dated example of painted signage. The deep fascia appears to have been canted and the blind boxes formed a simple cornice, whilst the lettering was painted in a three-dimensional style.



Figure 32. The former Smith's Furnishing Stores at 38-40 High Street – demolished in 1957, pictured in 1949. © Historic England bb50/00217 (detail)



Figure 33. 41 High Street. A victorian building with a plain post-war shopfront largely dating from the 1970s. © Historic England DP247559



Figure 34. 41 High Street as seen on the 10th March 1976 – a typical post-war butcher's shop with large plate-glass display window and a tiled stallriser. SROL: 1176/1/13/7/3/13. Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*



Figure 35. 42 High Street, another plain post-war shopfront lacking details such as pilasters, a cornice or consoles. © Historic England DP247560

Number **41 High Street** has a modern shopfront devoid of pilasters, consoles, fascia or cornice (Figure 33). The plate-glass windows and double doors are flush with the façade and eight courses of bricks separate the shop window from the signboard and blind box above, whilst the stallriser is covered by simple square tiles. Planning permission for the 'installation of a new shopfront for butchers shop' was granted in December 1975 (the building was subsequently listed at grade II in 1977).¹⁶ The style of the tiles, blind box and signboard, as seen in Figure 34, appear consistent with this date but the shop window has been reduced in size to allow a separate entrance for the upper floors to be inserted to the right. An earlier shopfront is just visible in the corner of Figure 13, showing a cornice with blind box and signboard above. The plate-glass window is shown as having a wide pierced ventilator strip to the window head, a typical feature for a 19th-century butcher's shop.

Number **42 High Street** (also grade II listed) has a very plain shopfront with no real identifying features (Figure 35) and appears to be late 20th-century in design, with a blind box and signboard matching that of 41 High Street, in the correct position for a fascia but without any pilasters, cornice, or consoles. The single plate-glass window is flush with the doorway.

Numbers **43-44 High Street** (grade II listed), 'Town Hall Stores', have a striking modern shopfront with rectangular glass windows incorporating arched glazing bars to the heads, and multi-paned glazed doors (Figure 36). The design is generally

historicist, but there are no known historic examples of this style on Lowestoft's High Street and the wide, flat fillet moulding of the glazing bars seems rather too



Figure 36. 43-44 High Street, a modern shopfront of c.2003 in a traditional style. © Historic England DP247561



Figure 37. 43-44 High Street, 29th March 1976. Elements of an early Victorian shopfront of c.1840 are visible on the left. SROL: 1176/1/13/7/3/26 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*



Figure 38. 43-44 High Street, 26th November 1982. All traces of the former early Victorian shopfront were removed and replaced by plain plate-glass windows in c1978. SROL: 1176/1/14/3/11/54 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*

chunky. The shopfront in 1976 was very different, as seen in Figure 37, with a small shop window on the left (43 High Street) and a doorway to either side, flanked by narrow reeded pilasters with corner roundels, and a pierced ventilator strip to the window head. Number 44 High Street had central double doors and a lobby with display windows to either side, flanked by plain pilasters with a modest entablature to the heads. Above the windows were projecting blind boxes, with a shaped signboard above. Planning permission was granted for a 'new shop front and alterations to 43-44 High Street' in November 1977¹⁷ and by 1982 most of these historic elements had gone (Figure 38), with the loss of the lobby and display windows to 44 High Street, as well as the blind boxes and signboard. Further permissions were granted in November 1988 for 'sub-division to form 2 shops and new shopfront'¹⁸ and December 2002 for 'new shop front and replacement first floor front

windows',¹⁹ suggesting the current shopfront dates from c.2003. The building was listed at grade II in 1993 and the modern shopfront mimics historic details such as the pilasters – but the detail and mouldings used are not quite correct, leading to a somewhat unbalanced and flat design. The painted sign, 'Town Hall Stores. Est. 1837' may suggest a possible date for the installation of the shopfront seen in Figure 37. The reeded pilasters of number 43 were certainly typical of the early Victorian period, and the pierced ventilator aligns with its history as a butcher's shop.²⁰

Number **45 High Street** (grade II listed) retains a largely unaltered early Victorian shop frame of c.1850 consisting of the cornice, fascia and pilasters, with 20th-century glazing and door (Figure 39). John Browne Chaston, woollen and linen draper, ran his business from number 45 from at least 1844 until 1855 and may have installed the shopfront. The narrow fascia of 45 High Street is highly distinctive – in the absence of consoles, the ends of the fascia have been scooped out to form a scotia profile, a practice which was common in the 1830s but continued into the middle of the century.²¹ The pilasters have simple, restrained mouldings which are also consistent with an early Victorian date. A 1920s photograph shows the shop as it was under George Hayes, an ironmonger, with its plate-glass glazing of two panes to each display window, separated by a deep and very thin astragal-moulded vertical glazing bar, and a very deep and gently splayed lobby; these are likely to date from the late 19th century.²² The current glazing, with hammered

transom glass, was probably inserted in the inter-war period, or the early years of the post-war period. George Hayes had set up business at 45 High Street in 1922, taking over not only 45 High Street from another ironmonger by the name of Thomas Thirtle, but number 47 as well. Thirtle first established a shop at 46 High Street in the 1840s, moving to number 45 after it was auctioned in 1874 (it was formerly the premises of a linen draper – the deep windows would have been well suited to displaying rolls of fabric).²³ He then opened a showroom at 47 High Street in 1895. Number 46 High Street was taken over by William Corbyn, a tailor and hatter, who occupied it from 1875 until it was added to George Hayes' business in 1948/9, consolidating it with numbers 45 and 47 to create a single business specialising in ironmongery and general furnishings.²⁴



Figure 39. 45 High Street – 20th-century glazing within an early Victorian frame with unusual scooped ends to the fascia. © Historic England, DP247562

Number **46 High Street** – the grade II listed former shop of Thomas Thirtle and later of William Corbyn (see above) – retains a largely unaltered late 19th-century shopfront (Figure 40); the arrangement of the lobby and the display windows with the thin astragal-moulded vertical glazing bars is almost identical to those lost at 45 High Street. The pilasters, consoles, fascia and cornice are all quite narrow but deeply moulded, and the stallrisers are clad in ox-blood red tiles.



Figure 40. 46 High Street retains a largely unaltered c.1900 shopfront with thin, deep, astragal-moulded glazing bars. © Historic England DP247563

Number **47 High Street**, again grade II listed, is one of the more unusual shopfronts on Lowestoft's High Street (Figure 41). The lobby has been recessed to the extreme, creating an arcaded style with display windows lining its full depth (Figure 42). W. O. Chambers drew up



Figure 41. 47 High Street is unusual in having a largely post-war 'arcaded' lobby, although it may have 19th-century origins. © Historic England DP247564



Figure 42. The deep lobby of 47 High Street appears to have been extended. © Historic England DP236850

designs for a house, shop and warehouse for J. Abbott, ironmonger, in 1872 but the plans have been destroyed.²⁵ A clear break on either side of the lobby, most clearly evident in the stallriser, suggests that a shorter arcade was extended to its current length, and the change from thin filleted glazing bars to wide, flat mouldings suggests a 20th-century date for the extension of the arcade. The current owner has been in residence since 1975 and states that she knew the carpenter and knows that the showcases were installed after the Second World War. This would suggest the extension was associated with George Hayes and the expansion of his business in 1948/9. More commonly associated with jewellers, arcaded lobbies were popular in the late 19th century and it is possible that the original arcade was installed either in the 1870s as part of Abbott's redesign, or when the property became Thomas Thirtle's ironmongery showrooms in 1895 (see above).

Number **48 High Street** (grade II listed) lacks a cornice or consoles, making the fascia somewhat undefined (Figure 43). The shopfront also lacks pilasters and consists of a display window with deep transom lights and

Figure 43. 48 High Street lacks certain elements commonly seen on a traditional shopfront, and appears to be early to mid-20th century in date. © Historic England DP247565





Figure 44. 50 High Street – the change in the brickwork between the ground and first floors following the removal of shopfronts is clearly visible.
© Historic England DP247566

heavy glazing bar, with flush shop door to the right and door to the accommodation above on the left. The glazing bars suggest an early 20th-century date for the window, or a post-war design in a traditional style.

Number **50 High Street** is now split into two residential properties and was listed at grade II in 1977 (Figure 44), but there is a clear change in brickwork between the ground and first floor. As seen in Figure 12, a shopfront existed in this location by the late 18th century. Photos from 1975 (Figure 45) and 1978 (Figure 46) reveal that the Georgian shopfront was replaced by two 19th-century shopfronts, both with deep, square or gently splayed lobbies. The style of glazing – with a single large pane to the front of the display windows and four smaller panes with deep astragal moulded glazing bars to the lobby return windows – suggests they were designed as a pair. The northernmost (left) shop was altered prior to 1978, with the insertion of a an



Figure 45. A lost shopfront on the corner of Crown Score, 50 High Street, as seen in November 1975. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 2351/4/3/8 (detail)



Figure 46. Former shopfronts at 50 High Street, as seen on 28th April 1978. SROL: 1176/1/13/9/4/18 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*

additional door and, presumably, the loss of a display window as well as the outer pilaster. The deep lobbies and large plate-glass windows suggest a date in the late 19th century, although the pilasters and fascia were unusually restrained. The list description describes the current arrangement (and therefore the removal of the shopfronts) as dating from the late 20th century.

The shopfront of number **51 High Street**, at the southern corner with Crown Score (Figure 47), has a deep canted fascia with a tall console to the south, canted display windows with an off-centre lobby, modern-tiled stallrisers and a side door to the property above. The pilasters, fascia and joinery are all very restrained, with just a touch of decoration in the form of stylised flowers on the console hinting at the Art Nouveau style (Figure 48). The glazing bars for the transom lights in the north window are made from simple flat moulded timber, but the ovolo mouldings to the ventilator strip above suggest that the windows were originally single sheets of plate glass (as in the southern window), with one long ventilation grille above each window – now blocked and lacking the full moulding of the panels to either side. The shopfront appears to date from c.1900 with 20th-century alterations. The shop belonged to a series of confectioners and bakers and was advertised for sale by auction in 1910 as a double-fronted shop with bake office.²⁶



Figure 47. 51 High Street – a restrained former bakers' shopfront of c.1900 with 20th-century alterations. © Historic England DP247567

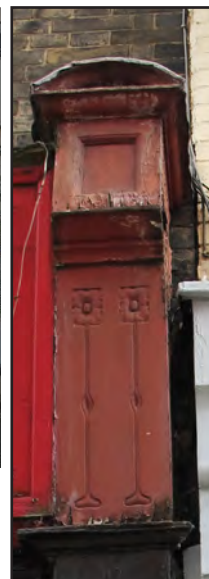


Figure 48. Floral geometric carving to a console at 51 High Street. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

The shopfront of **52 High Street** has a restrained elegance (Figure 49), with a deep astragal-moulded vertical glazing bar dividing the single display window with transom lights above and a deep, splayed side lobby with matchboard panelling. The fanlight and window heads have shaped corners, with the central glazing bar splayed at the top in the form of small spandrels. The stallriser is fairly high and is rendered with one small ventilation grille. The left (northern) pilaster is moulded, with three guttae below the console; the guttae of the southern pilaster have been removed and partially obscured by the addition of a downpipe. The consoles and fascia appear a little too flat and crisp to be original and may be a 20th-century alteration to an otherwise early Edwardian design. The small-scale and generic



Figure 49. An Edwardian shopfront with later alterations at 52 High Street. © Historic England DP247568

design of the shopfront appears to have appealed to a variety of trades, the property being used over the course of 100 years by a draper, a watchmaker, a tobacconist and a hairdresser.

The Post Office at **53 High Street** was built in c.1932 but has a modern shopfront (Figure 50), with planning permission granted in June 1997 for a 'new shop front and internal alterations'.²⁷ This new shopfront was designed with elements such as arched window heads which are generally historicist in style but inaccurate in composition and execution. Heavy wooden arches set within otherwise square-headed frames may be seen on a number of Victorian shopfronts in Great Yarmouth but do not appear to have been a feature on Lowestoft High Street, and details such as the consoles are rather chunky. A photograph from the 1960s (Figure 51) shows the building during construction work to install a new shopfront.



Figure 50. A modern shopfront in a traditional style at 53 High Street. © Historic England, Edward James



Figure 51. An undated photograph from the 1960s shows both 53 High Street (centre, flat white fascia) during renovation work and 54 High Street when it was still divided into two shops. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1504/1/4/1

Also visible in the foreground of Figure 51 is **54 High Street** which then contained two separate shops; the painted signage of Arthur Hollis is clearly visible on the dark fascia. The shopfronts were united by their deep bracketed consoles and canted fascias – they were apparently designed as a pair. Both had display windows with a central lobby. Hollis’ store (a corn merchant’s from the 1930s; described as a general grocer’s by 1965)²⁸ had deep transom lights with ventilator strips above, whilst the southern shopfront was also a greengrocer’s in the mid-20th century, and had been a fishmonger’s from 1909. Prior to 1909, trade directories have only a single entry for 54 High Street, and it seems likely that the two shopfronts date from c.1910.

Plans by W. O. Chambers for a shop were drawn up in 1863 (Figure 52) and have been catalogued as ‘High St 128. Alterations to Grocery & Provisions Premises for Messrs J & T Devereux, including new shop front.’ However, nothing on the design identifies the property, and two brothers by the names of James and Thomas Devereux ran a grocery business at 54 High Street from c.1850 to 1865 (Thomas is then listed at 54 High Street from 1867 to 1869 and again from 1892 until 1907).²⁹ Whilst John Devereux is listed as a grocer at 128 High Street from 1844 onwards, it would appear that the design by Chambers was for a shopfront at James and Thomas’s business at 54 High Street when it was still a single shop, rather than John’s at 128 High Street. This shopfront was removed when the

property was divided, and the later southern shopfront of 54 High Street can be seen on the left in Figure 54: a classic grocer's display of goods set out on the sloping boards in the display windows and delicate ventilation strips to the window heads. The International Tea Company occupied the shop in the 1940s but the rear of the property was damaged by bombing during the Second World War. Today, the property is once again home to a single shop which has a plain post-war design (Figure 53) with a flat fascia devoid of consoles, and flush plate-glass windows with a wide side lobby to the north.

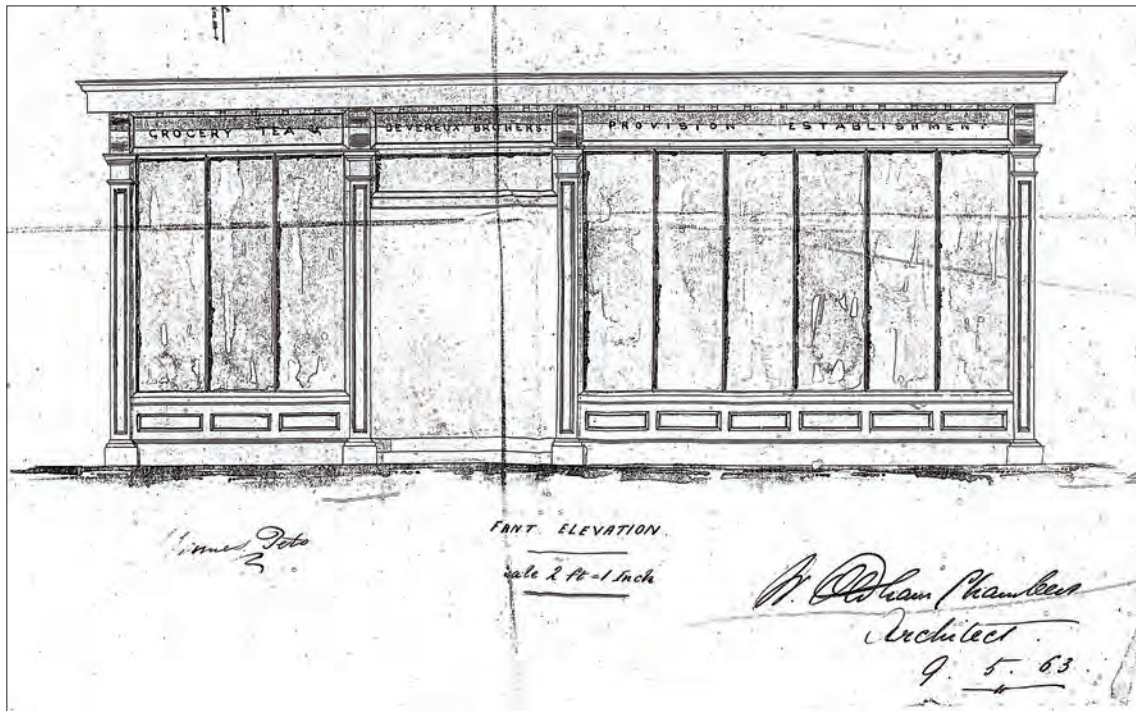


Figure 52. Designs for a shopfront at 54 High street, mistakenly catalogued as being for 128 High Street, were signed by James Peto – Sir Samuel Morton Peto’s trustee and one of Lowestoft’s chief landowners in the 1850s and 1860s. WDC L136. Drawing by W.O. Chambers dated 1863. Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council



Figure 53. The modern shopfront of 54 High Street, a very plain design lacking most of the elements of a traditional shopfront. © Historic England DP247569



Figure 54. Seen in 1949, 54 High Street is visible on the left and 56-57 High Street on the right (the shopfront clearly legible despite the mark ups on the windows). © Historic England BB50/00220

Also clearly visible in Figure 54 is the shopfront of **56-57 High Street**, which has survived almost intact (Figure 55). The blind boxes above the cornice and the panelling to the stallrisers have been lost (partly due to the rise in the level of the pavement) but the framework and glazing is as seen in 1949. The original designs



Figure 55. 56-57 High Street is an almost fully intact example of a shopfront designed by W. O. Chambers and W. J. Roberts in 1889. © Historic England, Edward James

for the shopfront were drawn up by W. O. Chambers and W. J. Roberts in 1889 for Mr A. Stebbings, a stationer, and include profiles of the mouldings at full and part-scale. The coloured elevation drawing of March 1889 (Figure 56) varies a little from the building as it survives: elements such as the geometric design on the pilasters, the arched windows to the lobby and the first-floor window surrounds were simplified, and the slightly plainer details seen in the technical drawings dated April 1889 (Figure 57) are those we see on the shopfront today. Figure 54 shows the remains of lettering (probably gold) on a black band towards the top of



Figure 56. Elevation drawing of a proposed shopfront at 56-57 High Street in March 1889, executed largely as designed. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/370

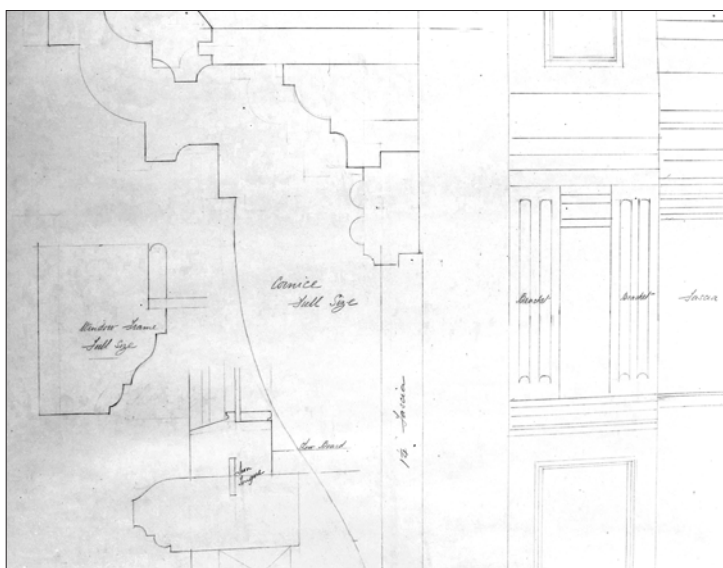


Figure 57. Technical drawings of mouldings and profiles for the proposed new shopfront at 56-57 High Street, April 1889. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/370

the windows, advertising 'Swan Fountpens'. The deep mouldings of the cornice, window frames and glazing bars, the decorated pilasters, splayed lobby and double brackets to the consoles, are all typical features of late 19th-century shopfronts in Lowestoft.

Number **58 High Street** is a fine and well-intact example of a mid-20th-century bakery (Figure 58). Built in c.1960, following the destruction of the International Tea Stores Ltd shop on the site in February 1941, the shopfront is characteristically plain with small surrounding tiles and an asymmetrically splayed lobby protected by a retractable awning. The emphasis is placed on the goods displayed within the window rather than on the framework of the shopfront itself. Number 18 Queen Street, Southwold (Figure 11), provides an example of a surviving International Tea Stores shopfront nearby, giving a sense of what existed prior to 1941.



Figure 58. 58 High Street is a typical example of a mid-20th-century bakery, with its asymmetrically splayed lobby and tiled façade.
© Historic England
DP247571

K. A. Morrison has published a report on **59 High Street** which discusses the property's history and features in detail.³⁰ It is an interesting, and rare, example of a purpose-built chemist's shop and house constructed in 1851, with surviving shopfront, interior, and an unusual mechanism in the cellar for raising and lowering shutters. Recently listed at grade II, it is an early example of the Italianate style in Lowestoft. The shop window has distinctive vertical panes with arched heads (Figure 59), as well as an early surviving example of a lettered band disguising the edge of the carboy shelf – the shelf itself is often the most characteristic feature of a historic chemist's shop. Whilst number 59 is an unusually fine survival of an 1850s shopfront, elements of the design, such as the narrow pilasters and cornice, can be seen in other mid-19th-century shopfronts on Lowestoft's High Street.

Numbers **64-66 High Street** form a block, with surviving shopfronts to 64 and 66 (Figure 60). Number 64 High Street has a simple polished granite stallriser and pilasters, a very deep lobby with brass details on the door (Figure 61) and small grey and white geometric floor tiles, suggesting an inter-war date. The glazing was replaced in the late 20th century, but a photograph taken in 1949 (Figure 62) shows



Figure 59. 59 High Street, a rare surviving example of a purpose-built chemist's shop of the 1850s.
 © Historic England DP232171



Figure 60. 64, 65 and 66 High Street – built as a single development, though the shopfront of 65 has been entirely removed. © Historic England DP236851



Figure 61. The lobby of 64 High Street, with polished grey granite stallrisers, geometric floor tiles and brass fittings on the door suggesting an inter-war date. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

that the transom lights were once very deep with marginal glazing. The consoles have either been boxed in or replaced and the fascia has been covered in wooden cladding, but the blind box survives. Figure 62 also shows that 65 High Street had a very tall canted fascia with blind box above, partly obscuring the base of the first-floor window, painted with shadow lettering stating 'The Adelphi'. A projecting sign attached to the mullions of the first-floor window reads 'Adelphi Restaurant' and the fascia terminated in scrolled consoles. The shop window was to the left of a recessed lobby and had nine panes of glass with deep glazing bars and a shaped stallboard above an apparently granite stallriser with two ventilation grilles – the use of granite again suggesting an inter-war date. The

shopfront of number 65 has been removed and replaced by two doors and a central window within an approximation of the outer framework of a shopfront, although the plain pilasters do not match up with the very short and narrow consoles on the thin fascia above, and the cornice is perfunctory. Planning permission was granted



Figure 62. 64-66 High Street seen in 1949, showing 65 High Street still in use as a restaurant and writing on the stallriser for the tobacconist's at 66 High Street. © Historic England bb50/00221 (detail)

in February 1989 for ‘conversion to 4 self-contained flats,’ so presumably work was undertaken at around this date (see below).³¹ One of the most striking features in Figure 62 is the writing on the stallboard and stallriser at 66 High Street. The shop was a tobacconist’s for most of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and St Julien Tobacco was a well-known brand from 1898 onwards – it appears that this is what was written on the stallboard. The current shopfront of 66 High Street has been partially obscured by the addition of a very deep fascia which extends over the transom windows. Originally these had six small panes to each light, and one window survives over the lobby (Figure 63). The consoles seem rather too thin and short to be original and were probably added in c.1989 when permission to alter both 65 and 66 High Street was granted.³²



Figure 63. Behind the modern shop sign of 66 High Street, a six-pane transom light with hammered glass survives above the lobby. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Number **67 High Street** is a fairly typical example of a shop designed for the sale of consumable goods, with a wide sash window with horns and a tall rendered stallriser (Figure 64). The shopfront has a shallow fascia with pairs of scrolled brackets to the cornice, and decorated pilasters. The shop door is flush with the façade, and the detail on the windows and doors suggests a date of c.1900 (Figure 65). A miller and corn merchant is listed at the address in 1855 and the property continued to be used by millers until 1927, when it was taken over by a dairyman and then fishmongers in 1952.³³



Figure 64. 64 High Street, which retains a typical example of a wide sash window for the sale of perishable goods. © Historic England DP236852



Figure 65. The letterbox of 67 High Street – the Gothic style of writing suggests a date of no later than c.1900. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Number **68 High Street** (Figure 66) is unusual in having post-war display windows which are gently angled towards the central doorway to form a very wide and shallow splayed entrance – the doorway being recessed no more than perhaps 20cm and set flush with the windows, the transom lights running continuously above the main windows and the double doors. The glazing bars appear to be modern, and a photograph of 1989 shows the main windows without transom lights (Figure 67). The interrupted fluting on the pilasters is quite unusual, and the tall fascia is finished with double-bracketed consoles.



Figure 66 (above). 68 High Street is unusual in having a shallow but widely splayed shopfront. © Historic England DP236853



Figure 67 (right). The former glazing scheme of 68 High Street as seen on 4th March 1989. SROL: 1176/2/2/19/609. Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*

Numbers **70-71 High Street** (Figure 68) was divided into two shop units in the 1990s (permission for ‘conversion of single shop to two shop units’ was granted in December 1990).³⁴ The building had lost its original shopfront prior to May 1979, when a photo (Figure 69) shows it with a single post-war shopfront and off-centre lobby. The latter survives as the entrance to the southern (right) unit – the gentle splay, depth and use of grey and white geometric tiles are very similar to the arrangement at 64 High Street, and the decorative ventilators, simple timber colonettes and stallboards all support an inter-war date. Currently the property houses two shops with semi-permanent security grilles obscuring the windows, and deep, modern fascias above without any form of consoles or cornice. The original shopfront arrangement is shown in designs drawn by George Glover in October 1877 for Mr Thomas Hodgson, a tailor and hatter (Figure 70). Designed in the Italianate style with rusticated banding and arcaded windows with decorative spandrels, the impressive scheme is reminiscent of the 1864 design of 124 High Street by W. O. Chambers, not far to the south (see below). Glover’s design is quite late for an Italianate shopfront and aspects of the drawing, such as the lobed window surrounds, seem to have been directly influenced by the more ambitious and prominent design by Chambers, whilst the presence of a fascia and splayed



Figure 68. 70-71 High Street, divided into two units; the shop on the right retains an inter-war lobby. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael



Figure 69. The inter-war shopfront of 70-71 High Street in May 1979. SROL: 1176/1/13/10/5/28 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*



Figure 70. Designs for 70-71 High Street by George Glover, October 1877. An Italianate design with arcaded windows, the original layout was for a single unit. SROL: 540/36/2/23. Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council

lobby are more typical of the later Victorian period. The rhythm of the shopfront was emphasised by brackets which punctuated the fascia in line with the colonettes (as seen at 59 High Street), providing a vertical emphasis. The central double doors and the door to the right (south) were coloured in brown to denote timber; the fact that the colonettes and spandrels were not suggests they were probably intended to be made from cast iron.

Number **72 High Street** has a fairly elaborate Edwardian shopfront (Figure 71): tall consoles with unusually narrow and widely spaced double brackets, a single pane of curved glass forming the display window to the right of the off-centre lobby, and a matching curved return to the left window. Much obscured by a secondary framework of modern security shutters and a very deep signboard, the original fascia appears to be canted with a narrow cornice. The double doors and the fanlight above have curved corners to the glazing, complementing the curves of the lobby and main windows. The deep, angled stallboard probably once had lettering on it, as seen at 149 High Street.



Figure 71. 72 High Street, an Edwardian shopfront with curved plate-glass display windows. © Historic England DP247574

The Maypole Dairy Company was trading from **73 High Street** from at least 1913.³⁵ The shopfronts of the company were amongst the most distinctive and fine of any national chain at the turn of the 20th century and elements of the Maypole design are evident today (Figure 72). A typical Maypole shop took the form of a lobby entrance to one side of a plate-glass display window, which generally had ornate carved spandrels and a ventilator strip. The Maypole name was frequently worked into mosaic floors as well as incised in V-cut and gilded lettering on the fascia and stallboards (Figure 73), whilst the monogram often appeared on the bronze door handles and the consoles. Although the window of number 73 has been replaced, elements of the Edwardian Maypole shopfront survive in the form of the consoles and mirrored pilasters (Figure 74). The interiors of Maypole shops were adorned with pictorial tile panels; one identical to Figure 75 was uncovered inside 73 High Street in 1989 during redecoration work, suggesting that at least some of the interior features may still survive.³⁶ Permission to alter the existing shopfront was granted in February 2017 and the proposed plans include the addition of turned timber posts and details ‘to closely resemble the original design elements’,



Figure 72. 73 High Street: the partial remains of a Maypole Dairy shopfront of c.1913. © Historic England DP247575



Figure 73. Maypole branding on the stallboard of 15 High Street, Leominster – a Maypole shopfront which still retains its mirrored pilasters, carved spandrels and ventilator strip. © Historic England AA009183



Figure 74 (left). Peeling paint at 73 High Street, Lowestoft, reveals the survival of mirrored glass on the pilasters of the former Maypole Dairy. © Historic England DP247577



Figure 75 (right). A pictorial tile panel from the former Maypole Dairy at 15 King Street, Ludlow – an identical example was uncovered at 73 High Street, Lowestoft. © Historic England AA009236

but also the introduction of a second door resulting in a central window.³⁷ It is not clear what original design elements are referred to in the plans, and therefore whether they would be based on a Maypole design. A letter from East Suffolk Council's Design and Conservation Team in 2005 (part of the 2017 application) mentions that 'there is currently an enforcement case against the unauthorised removal of the shopfront from the previous, apparently historic one, and the installation of an aluminium one', suggesting that the Maypole shopfront was removed without permission prior to 2005.

Number **74 High Street** (Figure 76) is a good example of a modest grocer's shop, formerly belonging to an umbrella manufacturer. The property was taken over by J.W. Nichols 'fruiters' in 1896 and the wide sash window with decorative pierced ventilator strips above almost certainly dates from this change of use. The shopfront is generally modest in scale and design.



Figure 76. 74 High Street retains a typical example of a shop window designed for the sale of consumable goods, with a wide sash window and a decorative ventilator strip above. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Number **75 High Street** has an entirely modern shopfront (Figure 77), permission being granted in February 1996 for a new shopfront on the grade II listed building.³⁸ Evidence for the previous frontage is lacking. The present design has a deep central lobby, exposed stretcher-bond brick stallrisers, square panes of glass with chunky glazing bars and four smaller panes to each transom light. The shaped fascia has delicate dentils, whilst the plain pilasters are topped with fluted consoles.



Figure 77. 75 High Street – a modern shopfront in a 'traditional' style but quite unlike any other on the High Street. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Number **76 High Street** has a central doorway without a lobby. The display windows to either side mimic the three-over-one style of sashes seen at 36 High Street but are actually single fixed windows, ventilation being provided by the hinged fanlight above the door (Figure 78). The shopfront is notable for its lack of fascia, cornice or consoles, instead having a projecting wooden hood. Such an unusual design is difficult to date, but a newspaper listing



Figure 78. 76 High Street – an unusual shopfront of c.1900 with fixed glazing and a wooden hood. © Historic England DP247578

of December 1892 advertised 'To let, a house and shop, with double front, at 76, High Street, Lowestoft' and the style is appropriate for the end of the 19th century.³⁹ The stretcher-brick stallrisers are a recent alteration to the grade II listed building.



Figure 79. 77-78 and 79 High Street. The plain design and splayed entrance of 77-78 are typical of the post-war period. © Historic England DP236854



Figure 80. 81 High Street – modern 'traditional' display windows and doorways are set within an apparently older framework. © Historic England DP247579

as a single shop (Figure 81). The shopfronts are very simple: a single fascia without consoles under a modest cornice, with plain pilasters only to the doorways, which are flush with the plate-glass windows. Number 83 High Street was advertised for rent in 1890 as having 'shop fixtures complete, gas fittings, counters &c'.⁴¹ Whilst plain designs tend to be early Victorian, the depth of the fascia, style of glazing bars and size of the window panes suggest a later date. Number 82 High Street was a chemist's until 1913 but the present shopfronts have none of the characteristics of a chemist's shop, suggesting that they may date from c.1922, when an electrical engineer was trading from the address.

The shopfront of **84 High Street** is very modest and apparently almost entirely post-war in date (Figure 82), with square-cut timber forming the window frame

Numbers **77-78 High Street** have a very plain asymmetrically splayed shopfront typical of the 1960s (Figure 79), whilst **79 High Street**, within the same post-war block, has a more traditional design, although still minimalist.

Number **81 High Street** (Figure 80) has a modern shopfront in the same generic style as 43-44 High Street and 53 High Street, with arched window heads formed from rather thick, flat glazing bars. The mouldings to the cornice and consoles are more elaborate and it is possible that the outer framework is late 19th-century in date. The display windows and doorways were almost certainly put in following the granting of permission for a new shopfront in 1998, as the amended list description (grade II) of 1993 mentions a 20th-century shopfront.⁴⁰

Numbers **82-83 High Street** (grade II listed) have two matching shopfronts, now in use



Figure 81. 82-83 High Street – a simple pair of shops merged into single usage, possibly dating from c.1922. © Historic England DP236855

and a continuous transom light running above the window and doorway. The low stallriser is clad with square tiles and the pilasters are completely plain. The fascia is obscured by the modern shop sign, but the narrow cornice above appears to potentially be Victorian.

Figure 83, taken in c.1910, shows the previous property at **85-86 High Street** as having a deep, splayed, central lobby and simple plate-glass windows, similar to



Figure 82 (above). 84 High Street – a simple post-war window and door set within an earlier framework. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

Figure 83 (right). Unusual free-standing lettering on John Buck's store at 85-86 High Street, demolished after the Second World War. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: K681/1/310/151





Figure 84. 85-86 High Street, a post-war design with a modern shopfront. © Historic England DP236856

those at 45 and 46 High Street, but most noticeably with large (c.2 ft high) free-standing three-dimensional letters advertising 'BUCKS' – John Buck being a china and glass dealer. Evidence of such lettering is unusual on Lowestoft's High Street. The current building (Figure 84) is a post-war design with variegated modern fenestration, permission being granted in March 1999

for the installation of a new shopfront.⁴² The fascia is flat, but the whole elevation is set within a salient surround, a feature seen on many post-war buildings.

Number **87 High Street** (Figure 85) is now in a poor state of repair, partially boarded up, and the modern shop sign obscures the fascia, but it is clear that the shopfront – formerly a butchers' – lacks consoles or a cornice. The central doorway is almost flush with the windows which project only very slightly on either side, and the fanlight (Figure 86) has been hand-painted with '87' in burgundy, yellow and cream – the style suggesting it was painted c.1900 – with a later mesh screen in front.



Figure 85. 87 High Street – a former butchers', now in a poor state of repair. The simple frame, where visible, suggests a date of c.1900 or a little later. © Historic England DP236857



Figure 86. The hand-painted number within the fanlight of 87 High Street; the later mesh screen suggests the fanlight opened for ventilation. © Historic England DP236858

Number **88 High Street** is also boarded up and in a very poor state of the repair (Figure 87), with rotting woodwork. The entrance at the side of the shop window lacks a lobby, and the fascia is shallow without consoles and only a minimal cornice, whilst the pilasters are very narrow – all suggestive of a mid-Victorian date. The style of glazing is unknown, but the fairly low stallriser has been clad with vertical rectangular tiles in the 20th century.



Figure 87. 88 High Street, a potentially mid-Victorian shopfront (with later alterations), currently in a very poor state of repair. © Historic England DP236859

Number **89 High Street** (Figure 88) has a modern restaurant frontage, but a photograph taken in 1937 (Figure 89) shows the former front of the baker's shop and tea rooms, with central splayed lobby and large plate-glass windows of c.1900. The signage on the shopfront is of note, with sans-serif gold lettering on a black band along the base of the windows and the fanlight above the door, with cursive shadow-lettering to the fascia. Signs were also painted over the render of the building above, as seen at 38 High Street. The position and proportions of the doorway and display windows has remained unchanged.



Figure 88. 89 High Street. The former bakery has been replaced by a modern restaurant frontage. © Historic England, Edward James



Figure 89. The former shopfronts of the bakery at 89 High Street, on the left, and W. & E. Turner's shoe shop on the right in 1937. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 598/8/7 (detail)

Numbers **90-91 High Street** were designed by W. O. Chambers for A. S. Clarke in c.1880; see page 69 for a discussion of Clarke's other branch of his grocery business at 124 High Street. The building was originally intended to have just one shopfront to the right (south), but seems to have quickly been divided into two separate shops. The original shopfront was designed with a splayed lobby with full-height plate-glass windows with pierced spandrels, a simple fascia and unusually decorative pilasters with colonettes (Figure 90). A newspaper advert of 1890 describes 'that desirable MODERN DOUBLE-FRONTED SHOP, with the DWELLING HOUSE adjoining, being No. 91 High Street, and situate in the most commanding position in the Town, and as for many years occupied by Mr. Adam Swallow Clarke'.⁴³ This description and date, combined with the sale of his other store in 1879, means the suggested date of c.1880 for the drawings is likely correct. The tops of the consoles survive but the present shopfront is otherwise entirely



Figure 90. Elevation drawing of proposed alterations at 90-91 High Street by W. O. Chambers, c.1880. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/190



Figure 91. 90-91 High Street, built to the design of W. O. Chambers but with substantial alterations to the shopfronts in more recent years. © Historic England DP236860



Figure 92. The mosaic lobby floor of 90 High Street, inserted in c.1925 for W. & E. Turner, boot makers.
© Historic England DP236862

modern, with a side entrance and flush plate-glass windows (Figure 91). The second shopfront, to the north, had been inserted by 1896 when Clarke was replaced by the Star Tea Company, and also Robert Peck, a house furnisher. The shopfront has a deeply moulded cornice and consoles, simple pilasters and a deep, splayed lobby with dentilling above the door, the fanlight being reduced to a narrow strip. The mosaic floor of the lobby has the name of the chain shoe

store which was trading here from at least 1925, W. & E. Turner Ltd, boot makers (Figure 92). Leaded transom lights with stained glass advertising Turner's brands of Hyacinth and Snowdrop were visible in 1937 (see Figure 89), but have since been removed and boarded up.

Numbers **92 and 93 High Street** are both examples of modern commercial frontages. Number 92 is a post-war building (Figure 93) with a plate-glass window which is flush with the door and recessed beneath the projecting upper floors, whilst number 93 is currently a restaurant (Figure 94) and has modern (c.2010) folding doors rather than a display window.⁴⁴ The business names are displayed on flat signboards.



Figure 93. 92 High Street – a post-war commercial property with a large plate-glass window. © Historic England DP236864



Figure 94. 93 High Street, any former shopfront has been replaced by modern folding doors. © Historic England DP236865

Number **94 High Street** has a largely modern shopfront in a traditional style (Figure 95), with an unusual hollow-moulded transom bar and chamfers to the glazing bars. The present arrangement of the central window with flanking doors is likely to date to c.2000, as permission was granted for a new shopfront in October 1999.⁴⁵ However, the scrolled console brackets and cornice appear to be older. The present shop sign obscures the fascia.



Figure 95. 94 High Street – a partly modern ‘traditional’ style shopfront set within an earlier framework.
© Historic England DP236867

The arrangement at **95-98 High Street** appears to date from the late 20th century, when a former carpet showroom was converted for use as a pub in 1998, and the frontage spans three buildings (Figure 96). The overly-deep fascia and oddly proportioned pilasters/consols are unlike anything else on Lowestoft’s High Street. A photograph from 1964 (Figure 97) shows the former shopfronts at that date. That of 95 High Street, largely obscured by its blind in the photo, had a simple central display window with side entrance. The deep fascia of number 96 extended over the top of the window but the photo appears to show a deep post-war lobby with an island showcase. The shopfront of 97-98 High Street was more unusual and appears to have included a wide splayed lobby similar to that of number 96 (the general arrangement suggesting they were built as a pair), but with the addition of an extra display case within the centre of the lobby. It is unclear whether this left enough room for an entrance, or if the shop was entered from one of the buildings to either side.



Figure 96. 95-98 High Street. The current frontage spans three buildings and dates to c.1998. © Historic England DP236869



Figure 97. 95-98 High Street on the 11th September 1964, showing the unusual display case at 97-98 High Street. SROL: 1176/1/12/5/9/8 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*

Number **99 High Street** has a minimalist post-war shopfront with a central doorway (Figure 98), the flat fascia extending down to form a salient frame to the window, as seen more clearly in Figure 97, taken prior to the painting and addition of mouldings in the style of pilasters. The ground floor was divided into two shop units in c.1997.⁴⁶ The designs for the original shopfront of 1866 survive and included two options – the as-built shopfront with side door to the south and timber colonettes with carved spandrels, and a doubtless more expensive cast-iron version with the side door to the north (Figures 99 and 100). Designed by W. O. Chambers, the elevations are Italianate in style and show how the same elements could be produced in either timber or cast iron with only relatively minor cosmetic changes (Figure 101). Commissioned by Mr A. Adams, a grocer and provisions merchant, the shop was designed with a large warehouse behind and the name ‘ADAMS’ set into the lobby floor. Figure 102, from a newspaper advert of 1908, shows 99 High Street not long after it was taken over by Thomas Clarke, a furniture dealer.⁴⁷ Although the details are unclear, the arcaded windows can just be made out, as can the upper mouldings of the cast-iron columns and applied san-serif lettering to the fascia.



Figure 98. 99 High Street – a simple post-war shopfront with minimal details. © Historic England DP236870



Figure 99. Proposed elevation of 99 High Street as designed by W. O. Chambers in 1866. The surviving fabric of 99 High Street suggests that the building was largely built as designed here. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/56 (detail)



Figure 100. Alternative design by W. O. Chambers for 99 High Street, showing a largely cast-iron shopfront. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SRO: HG3/1/2/56 (detail)



Figure 101. Detail of the original shopfront design of 99 High Street; the cast-iron column is shown in blue, with the timber window frame and door in brown. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SRO: HG3/1/2/56 (detail)



Figure 102. 99 High Street as seen in a photograph from 1908 – whilst somewhat unclear, the arcaded windows and some details of the cast-iron columns can be seen. © The *Lowestoft Journal*, April 25, 1908.

Number **100 High Street** (Figure 103) has a deep lobby and a plain fascia, set within the salient frame of the building. Salient surrounds (and sans-serif lettering, as seen on both 99 and 100 High Street in Figure 97) are typical of the post-war period, although the corrugated cladding and projecting part of the fascia are later additions. The current glazing of the shopfront is also secondary, probably dating to the 1970s, with slender aluminium glazing bars and an off-centre lobby. The blind box is by J. Dean of Putney.



Figure 103. 100 High Street has a typical post-war shopfront, with aluminium-framed display windows and salient surrounds to the first-floor windows. © Historic England DP236872

Designed as the Albion Stores Public House in c.1889,⁴⁸ 101 High Street (Figure 104) is not therefore a true shopfront although it displays many of the same features and could have been designed by an architect who also worked on shops. Whilst it lacks the deeper fascia and blind box of a shop, it has decorative elements such as applied pierced spandrels (Figure 105), which may have appeared on shopfronts of a similar date in Lowestoft.



Figure 104. 101 High Street, whilst it shares many features in common with a shopfront, was designed as a public house in c.1889. © Historic England DP236873



Figure 105. Decorative pierced spandrels at 101 High Street, a feature which may well have been seen on local shopfronts of a similar date. © Historic England DP236874

Numbers 102-104 High Street form a group (Figure 106), resulting from the division of a grade II listed mid-16th-century former house. Number **102 High Street** has a shop window with side door. Number **103 High Street** has a modern bow window. Number **104 High Street** has a 20th-century shopfront with the doorway flush with the display window. A later flat-fillet glazing bar divides the main windows from the transom lights above and a cornice fills the space between the window heads and the fascia, which is applied to the jetty of the building. Most of the elements of a traditional shopfront are present, but allowances had to be made for the framework of the timber-framed building.



Figure 106. 102-107 High Street. The shopfronts of 102, 103 and 104 are set beneath the jetty of a 16th-century building. © Historic England DP236875

Numbers **105-106 High Street** is a bold example of minimalist post-war shop design of c.1965 (Figure 107), relying on massing rather than detail to make an impact. The plain render, recessed frontage and lack of pilasters, fascia, consoles or cornice would have acted as a frame for the goods within the windows.



Figure 107. 105-106 High Street, a post-war building with typically minimal detail. © Historic England DP236877

Number **107 High Street** has a traditional-style shopfront (Figure 108), with tall consoles flanking the fascia, timber window frames and an opening fanlight above the door. However, the building dates from the mid-20th century and the style of fluting on the consoles and pilasters (which stop at stallboard level), the lack of cornice or blind box, and the simple square moulding of the timber for the doorway, all suggest that the shopfront also dates from around the 1950s (or slightly later), rather than being an older shopfront reused on a modern building.



Figure 108. 107 High Street – a mid-20th-century (or later) shopfront in a traditional style. © Historic England DP236878

West side

Number **112 High Street** (originally called 1 London Road North) was demolished to make way for Artillery Way in the 1990s. Undated designs for the original mid-Victorian façade by W. O. Chambers survive (Figure 109) and show tall, fixed, plate-glass windows to the central lobby and sash windows to either side, the upper sash with a single pane of plate-glass and horns, the lower with two panes and a vertical glazing bar, all united by the use of pierced spandrels to the window heads. The designs also show elaborate floral capitals to the pilasters and round-headed consoles, with blinds built into the fascia. Intriguingly, the plans for the lobby show 'old doors', suggesting an element of reuse from an earlier shopfront. The designs are likely, stylistically and given the presence of horns, to date to the 1870s or 1880s. A Mr E. Kent announced his grocery business was moving to the address in September 1880, which explains why the building was called Kent House (although it was formerly occupied by Mr Brundle, outfitter).⁴⁹ Later, the shop was home to the Star Tea Company from c.1906 to 1932. The shopfront designed by Chambers was replaced in the 20th century, as seen in a photo taken in c.1977 (Figure 110), which shows an apparently post-war shopfront with multi-paned transom lights and narrow glazing bars, possibly made from metal.

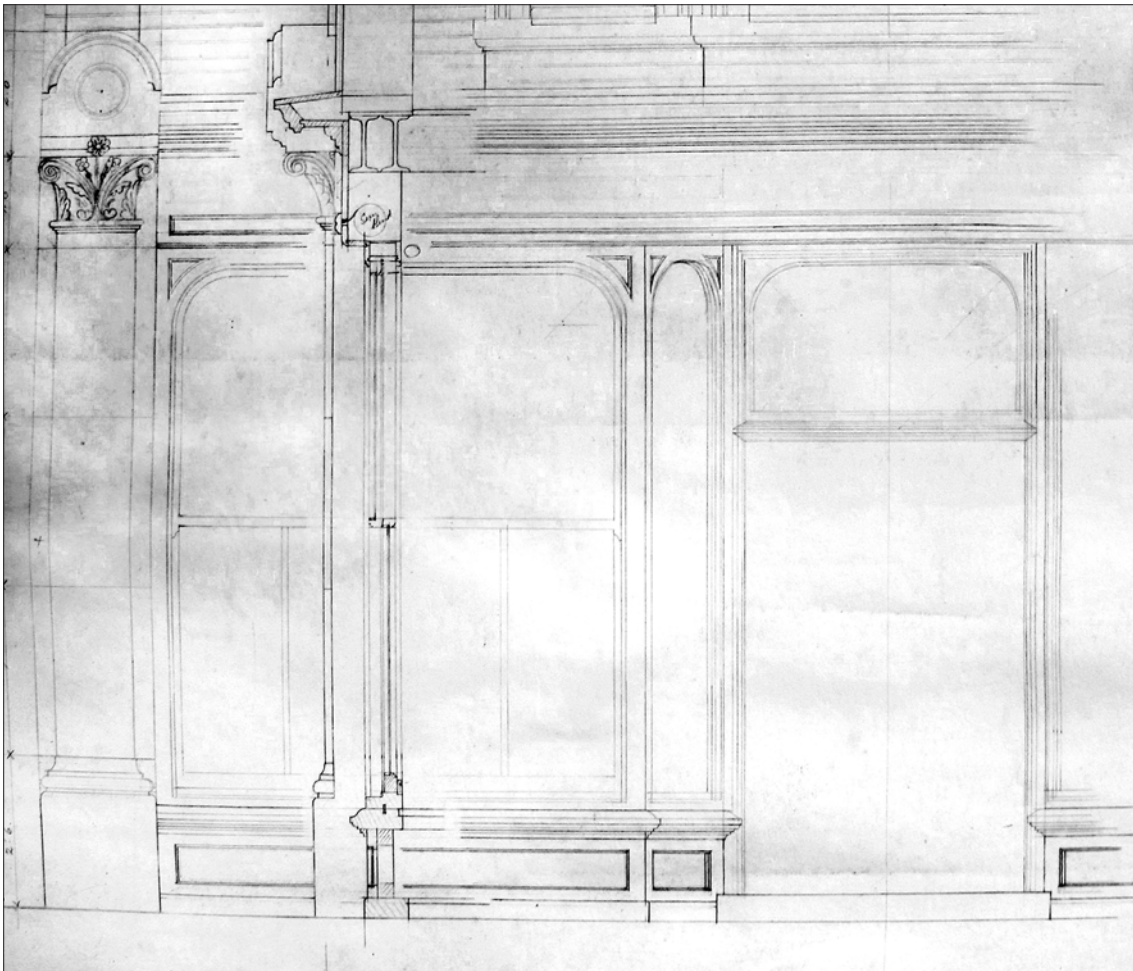


Figure 109. Undated designs by W. O. Chambers include the details of a late 19th-century shopfront at 112 High Street; the building was demolished in the 1990s. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/385 (detail)



Figure 110. 112 High Street, photographed in c.1977, when it had an apparently metal-framed mid-20th-century shopfront. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 2351/1/2/1/5 (detail)

The main display window of number **113-114 High Street** (formerly 105-106 High Street) has been altered and the tops of the windows are obscured by deep sign boards, but the majority of the shopfront survives – the wide pilasters, paired scrolled brackets, display windows and recessed lobby (Figure 111). Likely built around the turn of the 20th century, the shopfront has mouldings are quite heavy but simple, with curved heads to the fanlight and glazing of the door of 114 High Street.



Figure 111. 113-114 High Street, a c.1900 shopfront with later alterations. © Historic England DP236880

Number **115 High Street** (formerly 107 High Street) has an inter-war shopfront (Figure 112) dating from c.1930 and the arrival of the Easiephit Shoe Company (Figure 113). The deep lobby with mosaic floor (with holes for a shop gate), delicate glazing bars, brass fixtures on the door and minimalist cornice are typical inter-war features. Figure 114 was taken in 1924 and shows an earlier shopfront, when the shop was part of Alfred Taylor's tailoring and outfitter's business. The multi-paned transom lights suggest it was an Edwardian design, but the punctuating bracket, rising through the fascia to the blind box, is a feature generally seen on earlier shopfronts (see, for example, 59 and 70-71 High Street).



Figure 112. 115 High Street – an inter-war shopfront dating to c.1930 with minimal detailing. © Historic England DP236882



Figure 113. The lobby of 115 High Street. The Easiephit Shoe Company began trading here in c.1930 and the lobby was protected out-of-hours by a shop gate. © Historic England DP236883



Figure 114. The previous shopfront of 115 High Street is seen on the left of this photo taken in 1924, the style suggesting it was an Edwardian design. SROL: 1176/1/8/5/13/1. Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*

Number **116 High Street** (formerly the site of 108 High St) is a post-war building dating from c.1950 with a simple shopfront (Figure 115) dominated by large plate-glass windows. The shopfront has integrated metal roller shuttering, dentils to the base of the fascia, and an unusually tall signboard/parapet with rather odd paired brackets, which may once have supported statues. The shopfront is otherwise entirely plain, lacking pilasters or consoles. Permission was granted in April 2001 for the replacement of a shopfront⁵⁰ and the use of dentils is reminiscent



Figure 115. 116 High Street – a modern shopfront with ‘traditional’ style details including dentils.
© Historic England DP236884

of their use on 75 High Street, c.1996 – it would therefore appear that the present shopfront dates from c.2001. Plans survive for the Coffee Tavern, designed by George Glover in 1878, which once occupied this plot. Whilst not a shop, elements of the design (Figure 116) are familiar from Glover’s design for 70-71 High Street, such as the glazing style of the double doors and the Italianate vermiculated quoins. Whether this design was built as shown is unclear: the plans



Figure 116. George Glover's 1878 design for a coffee tavern on the site of 116 High Street. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 540/36/2/20 (detail)

and the Ordnance Survey map of 1905 show the building set back from the street, but Figure 114, taken in 1924, shows a building similar in style (if not detail) – with an arched entrance to the south and a projecting bay window – clearly in line with the other buildings, as also seen on the 1927 Ordnance Survey map. The property was taken over by A. E. Taylor in c.1920, the window seen in the photograph is not only Edwardian in style, with multi-paned transom lights, but also clearly a display window with splayed lobby, whilst the brick arched surround of the side entrance also appears more Edwardian than Victorian in style. It seems likely that the Coffee Tavern was built more or less as designed in 1878 before being demolished and replaced with a shop of similar design for A. E. Taylor in c.1920 – the V-cut and gilded lettering of the fascia and the metal plaques to the stallboards demonstrated the quality of Edwardian shopfronts.



Designs for **117 High Street** (formerly 109 High Street) were prepared for Mr A. Wright by W. O. Chambers. The elevation drawing (Figure 117) shows a simple shopfront design with a single plate-glass window set within a wooden frame with curved spandrels, a low stallriser with timber panelling, and raised-and-fielded panel doors, one to the shop on the left with a large glazed panel and one on the right providing access to the accommodation above. The ground-floor plan (Figure 118) shows a simple shop layout with a main L-shaped counter separated from the shallow shop window by a screen. The plans are undated but Chambers was most active during the 1860s and 1870s, and the first mention of A. Wright (a chemist) at 109 High Street is in Harrod's directory of 1873, making c.1872 a likely date for the shopfront

Figure 117. Designs for 117 High Street by W. O. Chambers are undated but details of the shopfront and trading history of the chemist's shop suggest a date of c.1872. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: HG3/1/2/349 (detail)

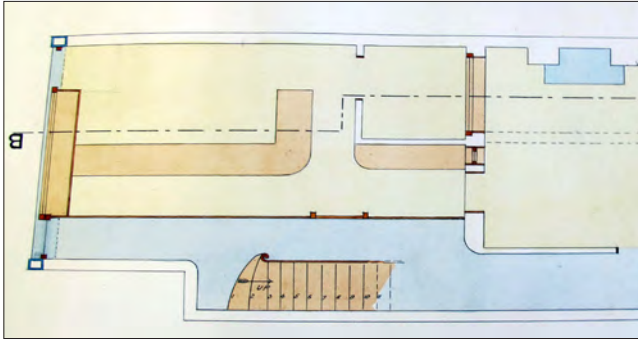


Figure 118. The original plans of 117 High Street show a shallow shop window with a simple L-shaped counter beyond. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/349 (detail)



Figure 119. The present shopfront of 117 High Street is a post-war design with asymmetrically splayed lobby and simple plate-glass windows set within the decorative framework of the 1870s. © Historic England DP236885



Figure 120. Plaques reading 'JW BROOKE LOWESTOFT' are affixed to the base of both pilasters at 117 High Street, for reasons unknown. © Historic England DP236886

design.⁵¹ An undated photograph in C. L. Hook's *Lowestoft High Street, The Butcher, The Baker and the Candlestick Maker* shows that much of the original Victorian shopfront was replaced with a contemporary interwar design which appears to be very similar to that just glimpsed at 97-98 High Street in Figure 97. The photo shows a gentleman standing in a lobby to one side of a central island showcase, with 'J. H. Bowness, Chemist' written on the fascia. Bowness took over the property between 1927 and 1930 and both the photo and the shopfront shown in it, with granite stallrisers and sharply angled display cases, are likely to date from this time. The property suffered bomb damage in February 1941, resulting in the loss of the interwar glazing. The present arrangement (Figure 119) is a classic post-war design with an asymmetrically splayed lobby and simple plate-glass windows. The original pilasters, cornice and consoles do survive (the design

as executed being slightly simpler in style to the original proposal), making the outer framework of the shop essentially 1870s. Figure 114 shows some of these details in 1924 – including the lost Ionic capitals with swag at the top of the pilasters. One detail which cannot yet be explained is the presence of a small metal badge to the base of each wooden pilaster, reading 'JW BROOKE. LOWESTOFT' (Figure 120). Brooke was a foundry set up in 1874 which specialised in engines before expanding into ship building and cars in the early 1900s. Based at the Adrian Ironworks on Alexandra Road, Lowestoft, the company is not known to have manufactured

shop fittings or fixtures – raising the question as to what they made which would have been of use on a chemist's shop. It is possible that they manufactured shop gates or shutters; or if number 117 has a cellar, perhaps the badges relate to a hoist or lifting mechanism. A plaque is also found in a similar position on 57 High Street, although it is too over-painted to be certain if it also reads J. W. Brooke.

Number **118 High Street** (formerly 110 High Street) is a good example of an Edwardian shopfront (Figure 121). The property was taken over by the River Plate Fresh Meat Company Ltd in c.1912, making it quite likely that they installed this shopfront at that date. The shopfront is quite simple in many respects, with plain pilasters and narrow paired brackets to the consoles; the fascia is quite deep but lacks a cornice, being topped instead with scalloped lead flashing. The side door is to the south, accessed via steps and set back from the central display window; the entrance to the shop is to the north, within a gently splayed lobby. The display window has a deep curved return to the south. This is supported by delicate timber colonettes with Ionic capitals (Figure 122), as is the canted return of the window to the shop entrance on the north. The main panel of the window appears to have been replaced as it is set within a rather chunky frame, resulting in the loss of a colonette between the main panel and the curved return. Above the window is a blocked ventilator strip. The door to the shop has an eye-catching circle design with an etched panel of glass below, the other panel having been replaced with plain glass, and appears to date from the late 1920s. The wall of the lobby is tiled, and the floor has geometric black and white tiles with a marble edge. The tiled lobby, marble floor and presence of ventilation strips are typical for a butcher's shop, although the style of glazing is more unusual.



Figure 121. 118 High Street, an Edwardian shopfront of c.1912 with deeply curved display window.

© Historic England DP236887



Figure 122. 118 High Street – slender timber colonettes with Ionic capitals are a typical feature of Edwardian shopfront design. © Historic England DP236888

Number **119 High Street** (formerly 111 High Street) is unusual in retaining both the V-cut and gilded fascia and the mosaic lobby floor for ‘STAR SUPPLY STORES’ (Figure 123). The central lobby is deep and quite widely splayed, and the display windows to either side have chunky, unmoulded frames rather than colonettes, with brackets dividing hammered-glass transom lights. The fascia lacks consoles, a cornice or blind box and all these factors suggest that the shopfront is unlikely to have been built before 1930. Previously trading at 112 High Street from c.1906 to 1932 as ‘The Star Tea Company’, the ‘Star Supply Stores (The Star Tea Company)’ is first listed at 119 High Street in 1934, number 119 having been occupied by the International Tea Company from c.1895 to 1930.⁵² The International Tea Company merged with the Star Tea Company in 1929/30,⁵³ after which many stores were rebranded. In Lowestoft this appears to have led to the closure of 112 High Street (then 1 London Road) and the rebranding of the International Tea Company as the Star Supply Store in c.1934 – resulting in the creation of a new shopfront.



Figure 123. 119 High Street. The Star Tea Company has a complicated history in Lowestoft, and this shopfront appears to date from c.1934. © Historic England DP236889

Numbers **120 and 121 High Street** appear to be formed from a heavily altered earlier building (Figure 124). Number 120 has a large window but no shopfront, permission having been granted in October 1981 to 'rebuild front wall of shop',⁵⁴ whilst the modern shopfront (really more of a shop window, with minimal details) of number 121 appears to date from c.1982 after permission was granted for change of use from a shop to a café with a new shopfront.⁵⁵



Figure 124. 120 and 121 High Street – modern utilitarian frontages with minimal detailing.
© Historic England DP236891

The shopfront of **122 High Street** is traditional in style with a deep fascia, consoles with double brackets and decorated pilasters (Figure 125). A photograph from c.1977 (Figure 126) shows the original shopfront, including the consoles and outer framework. Saunders & Son boot makers began trading from the address in 1902, the property having been used by a fish merchant until 1898,⁵⁶ making a date of 1902 for the outer framework very likely. The current wide, splayed frontage with central doorway dates from c.1980.⁵⁷



Figure 125. 122 High Street – the consoles and framework of a c.1902 shopfront survive, but the entrance and glazing date to c.1980. © Historic England DP236892

Figure 126. The original c.1902 shopfront of 122 High Street has been partly replaced but can be seen in this photograph of c1977. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 2351/1/2/1/6 (detail)



Plans of 1864 for a particularly fine shop and warehouse in the middle of what is now Market Triangle (**124 High Street**) show the quality of detail that local architect W. O. Chambers included in his schemes (Figure 127). The designs are dominated by the use of full height plate-glass windows with curved corners to both the High Street and St Peter's Street, set within a cast-iron framework with cast-iron (as shown by the use of blue) colonettes and decorated spandrels. One notable feature is the total absence of any fascia or entablature between the window heads and the cornice, whilst the overall design is in a fashionable Italianate style with classically-inspired rusticated banding to the ground floor and quoins. The floor plan (Figure 128) shows a deep display window to the corner, looking south down the High Street, with doors to both the High Street and St Peter's Street, and a free-standing counter.



Figure 127. 1864 designs by W. O. Chambers for a grocer's shop on the corner of the High Street and St Peter's Street show an Italianate building with a cast-iron shopfront. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROI: HG3/1/2/69 (detail)

Designed for a 'Mr Clarke', there is no mapping evidence for the construction of the building, it having been demolished prior to the survey of the 1883 Ordnance Survey map to allow for the widening of the High Street. However, one Adam Swallow Clarke, grocer, is listed on the site in 1858 with the last directory entry

being in 1879, the same year that the property was advertised for sale. A newspaper advert describes:

A Corner Building Site, with Double Frontage, in a position which may fairly be termed unrivalled for Business Purposes, comprising the first portion of the Ground to be cleared for the Improvement of High Street ... FREEHOLD BUILDING SITE, Now covered by the Shop, House and Premises, in the occupation of Mr. Adam Swallow Clarke, prevision [sic] merchant ... situate at the junction of High Street with St Peter's Street, having an imposing corner Frontage of 100 feet, and occupying a superficial Area of 1602 square feet.⁵⁸

Such a building, with its large curved display window facing down the High Street where the Triangle Market is now situated, would have been a highly visible and dominant presence and it is possible its design influenced that produced by George Glover for 70-71 High Street in 1877. Adam Swallow Clarke also owned 90-91 High Street, directly opposite on the east side of the street, which was again operating as a grocery business as early as 1867 (see page 50).

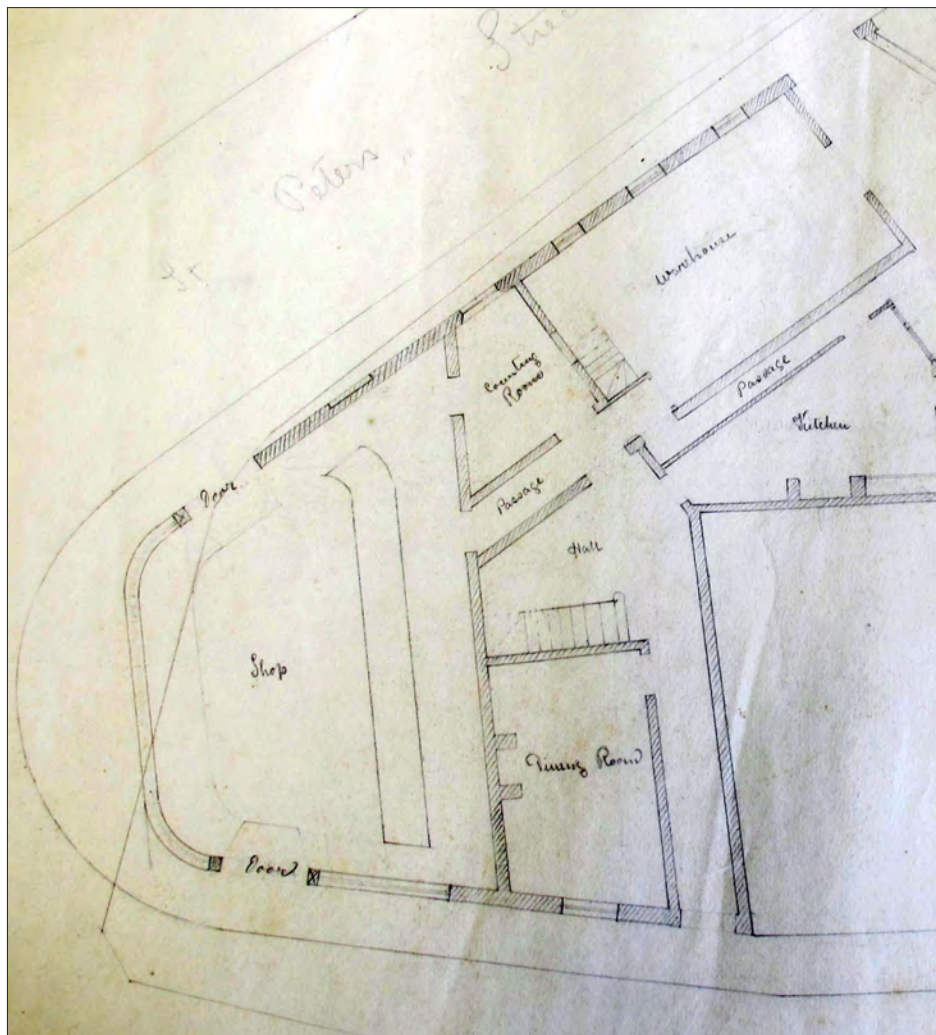


Figure 128 . The floor plans for W. O. Chambers' 1864 design show how he made full use of the corner plot with a large curved display window. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SRO1: HG3/1/2/69 (detail)

The block of buildings occupying **127-130 High Street** (Figure 129) were for many years under the ownership of John Devereux, grocer and provisions merchant, with shopfronts to the High Street and warehousing to Old Market Street, as seen in Figure 130, an undated photograph from the early 20th century. At its full extent, the shopfront of Devereux's store was around 26 metres long. Built in c.1869 to designs by the architect Mr Clemence following the widening of the High Street,⁵⁹ the shopfront of numbers 127-129 was designed as a single unit, with a splayed lobby entrance in the centre of number 128. The windows had round-arched heads, with large open circles within the spandrels. The stallrisers were low, with a modest stallboard – external signage was restricted to the fairly modest fascia, with external roller blinds fitted below the cornice. Much of the detail of the shopfront lies in the carving of the stone mullions, pilasters and consoles. The square-section mullions framing the display windows are heavily carved with chevrons, guilloche and nailhead bands (Figure 131), whilst the pilasters have vermiculated bases, a central circular motif containing a flower, and sea shells beneath the capitals.

The consoles to Old Market Street and to either side of number 128 have rectangular blocks with floral carving supporting triangular pediments, again with floral carving (Figure 132). The consoles to the south of number 127 and to the north of number 129 (dividing it from number 130) are different – with shallow double brackets to a shaped head (Figure 133), suggesting that numbers 127-129 marked the extent of the original shopfront, and that number 130 was added in c.1890 – a fact confirmed by a change in brickwork and details on the upper floors.



Figure 129. 127-130 High Street, built in c.1869 and extended c.1890. Constructed for the grocery and provisions merchant John Devereux, with a shop to the High Street and extensive warehouses behind.
© Historic England DP236901



Figure 130. Devereux's store was built in at least two phases, the two styles of shopfront clearly visible in this undated photograph. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 598/7/23



Figure 131. Elaborately carved mullions help to frame the display windows of the c.1869 shopfront at 127-129 High Street. © Historic England DP236900



Figure 132. Delicately carved triangular pediments to the consoles at 128 and 130 High Street. © Historic England DP236895



Figure 133. Shaped consoles at 127-129 High Street mark the extent of Devereux's original c.1869 shopfront. © Historic England DP236894

The slightly later shopfront at number 130, as seen in Figure 130, had simple vertical glazing bars, the lower section of each pane filled with stained glass which advertised the business and its contents. The entrance was to Old Market Street and the doors contained etched glass. Whilst the tops of the windows in numbers 127 and 128 have been obscured by modern signage externally, and by inserted ceilings internally, it appears that much of the shopfront has survived – including the mosaic floor in the lobby of number 128 (Figure 134) and the connectors for the crank arms of the blinds on the pilasters of number 127. Numbers 129 and 130 are now a single shop and the glazing has been replaced, with the insertion of transoms, whilst the entrance to Old Market Street has been blocked up. The painted signs visible on the gable wall of 130 High Street in Figure 138 have also been lost. Details of the original shop at numbers 127-129, such as the lobed window surrounds and vermiculated blocks, are similar to details seen at 124 High Street (1864 by W. O. Chambers) and also to 70-71 High Street (1877 by George Glover) and consistent with a date of c.1869.



Figure 134. The former entrance to Devereux's survives at least partially intact at 128 High Street, with black and white mosaic tiles to the lobby floor and distinctive carved mullions flanking the windows.
© Historic England DP236896

Numbers **131-133A High Street** are an Edwardian rebuild of an earlier group of buildings on the same site. An undated photo from c.1890 (Figure 135) shows the former buildings: a house, the old Globe Inn, and two shops. The shop on the far right was the former premises of B. Saunders, a butcher's, shown with its sash window open allowing meat to be displayed above the panelled stallriser and protected by a deep cornice. Just out of shot was the Blue Anchor Inn. When the block was rebuilt, the Globe Inn occupied 131 High Street, on the corner of Old



Figure 135. An undated photograph of c.1890 shows the buildings previously on the site of 131-133A High Street. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1828/3/1/15

Market Street, with ground-floor shop units at 132 and 133 High Street. W.J. Roberts, a local architect, designed the new building and shopfronts in 1903 and the two shopfronts have almost identical fascias, consoles and pilasters (with a central diamond motif to 132 and circles to 133). Number 132 has a deep, splayed lobby with a black and white tiled floor and brass fittings including the doorbell and the letterbox (Figures 136 and 137). The display windows have slender timber colonnettes and terracotta stallrisers, while the window heads have been obscured by a later signboard and an inserted ceiling. Number 133 High Street was designed as a butcher's shop (Figure 138) and has a marble stallriser inscribed with 'B. Saunders' in flowing script below a wide window which contains modern glazing. The entrance is to the north (right) side of the window and originally contained double doors with a stained-glass fanlight above – these have since been replaced with plainer examples, although the style of stained glass is still evident in the oval



Figure 136 (far left). The entrance of 132 High Street has a deeply splayed lobby with a black and white tiled floor. © Historic England DP236904

Figure 137 (left). Brass details, including the doorbell of 132 High Street, are typical features of an Edwardian shopfront. © Historic England DP236904

windows flanking the shop (Figure 139). A modern signboard obscures the fascia, but a photo taken in 2007 (Figure 140) shows a brilliant-cut and gilded sign which is likely to still survive.



Figure 138 (left). 133 High Street was designed by W. J. Roberts in 1903 with an inscribed marble stallriser, a contemporary take on the traditional design for a butchers' shop. SROL: 98/2753. Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council



Figure 139 (above) An oval stained-glass window at 133 High Street demonstrates a typically flowing, floral Edwardian design of 1903. © Historic England DP236908



Figure 140. A 'brilliant' sign appears to survive behind the modern signboard on the fascia of 133 High Street, as seen here in 2007. It reads 'Family Butcher 133 B. Saunders. 133 Shipping Supplied' in a mixture of serif and sans-serif fonts. Photo by, and reproduced courtesy of, Vici MacDonald / Shopfront Elegy / www.shopfrontelegy.com

Number **134 High Street** (grade II listed) has a simple shopfront with a wide late 19th-century-style four-over-four sash window with horns, a corner doorway flanked by pilasters, and a deep cornice which provides some protection from the elements (Figure 141). The style of shopfront suggests it was designed for the sale

of fresh consumable goods: the property was used by butchers from 1832 to 1883, and grocers/fruiterers from 1885 well into the mid-20th century. Permission for a facsimile replacement of the existing sash window was granted in 1992,⁶⁰ but work appears to have been limited to re-glazing using safety glass and the replacement of the glazing bars in the upper sash – the replaced upper glazing bars are filleted whilst the lower ones have a narrow astragal moulding.



Figure 141. 134 High Street retains a typical late 19th-century sash window (with later repairs) for the sale of consumable goods. © Historic England DP236909

Number **135 High Street** has a late 20th-century aluminium-framed shopfront (Figure 142). The shopfront is flush, with a plate-glass window with glazed door to the side, a fixed fanlight and fascia all individually framed. The somewhat utilitarian design and the use of aluminium suggest the current shopfront dates from the 1970s; it was certainly inserted prior to the listing of the building at grade II in 1977.



Figure 142. 135 High Street – the simplicity of design and the use of aluminium is typical of the 1970s. © Historic England DP236911

Numbers **136 and 137 High Street** are notable for their unusual truncated windows in the style of shallow display cases (Figure 143). Formerly a single property used by the watchmaker Edmund Crake in the late 19th century and later subdivided, number 136 became a butcher's shop and number 137 a tobacconist's. In 1927 number 136 changed again in use to a picture frame maker – the change in use could suggest a possible date for the shopfronts of c.1927. Both shopfronts appear to have always had timber frames rather than more expensive chrome (Figure 144), which was fashionable for display cases in the 1920s and '30s. The shallow lobbies and the style of the doors and windows support an inter-war date.



Figure 143. 136 and 137 High Street. The use of shallow, truncated display cases is unusual and suggests an inter-war date. © Historic England DP236912



Number **138 High Street** has a c.1900 shopfront with tall plate-glass windows, low stallrisers and a wide splayed lobby (Figure 145). Formerly central, the lobby is now off-centre due to the insertion of a side door and pilaster to the right of the entrance. Figure 144 shows some of the original design of the shopfront. The wide pilasters have a double panel design and the consoles are

Figure 144. The display cases of 136 and 137 High Street as photographed in June 1982. SROL: 1176/1/14/3/6/70 (detail). Reproduced by kind permission of the *Lowestoft Journal*



Figure 145 138
High Street – a
typical shopfront
of c.1900 with later
modifications.
© Historic England
DP236913

unusually short and wide, more in the style of a cornice. The bracketed cornice is a feature not seen elsewhere on Lowestoft's High Street. A large clock is suspended above the first-floor windows, facing up and down the High Street. This was almost certainly installed to advertise the watchmaking business of Edmund Crake, who took over the property in c.1885.

Number **139 High Street** was the premises of a harness maker and saddler's firm from 1822 until 1938, and has a fine shopfront of c.1900 which survives almost fully intact (Figure 146). The plain pilasters have Ionic capitals and scrolled consoles supporting a dentilled cornice and the shopfront is one of the more obviously classical designs on the High Street (Figure 147). The lobby is widely splayed with a black and white tiled floor, the low stallrisers are tiled and have decorative air grilles, and the door has a (now covered) geometric fanlight with central diamond motif above. A photograph of c.1942 (Figure 148) shows the windows divided into three panes along the front, but the current single sheet of glazing may be a return to the original design, with slender colonettes to the corners of the lobby and a decorative pierced ventilator strip above.



Figure 146. 139 High
Street – an unusually
intact shopfront
of c.1900, partially
hidden by later
alterations. © Historic
England DP236914



Figure 147. Classically inspired Ionic capitals and scrolled consoles at 139 High Street. © Historic England DP236916



Figure 148. 139 High Street as seen in a photograph of c.1942, with the display windows divided into three panes. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 2351/1/2/1/2

Numbers **141-142 High Street** have a modern shopfront with wide glazed doors, brick piers and plate-glass windows which have been partially covered, set beneath a dentilled cornice (Figure 149). The present arrangement bears little resemblance to the shopfront of 141 High Street as seen in a photograph of c.1900 (Figure 150), when the property was the showroom and shop of Morling & Culham, painters and decorators, who traded here from 1899/1900 to 1914. The photograph shows tall plate-glass windows with a moulded stallboard and heavily moulded cornice with dentils, but quite plain pilasters with simple capitals and no consoles. The shopfront was dominated by four large gas lanterns and the painting of the signage on the fascia, whilst the pilasters appear to have had decorative tiles, although the filigree-style design could have been painted. The dentilled cornice in



Figure 149. 141-142 High Street, a plain modern frontage beneath a dentilled cornice. © Historic England DP236917

the photograph is similar to the one seen today, but the current cornice continues unbroken across the façade of 142 High Street, which was originally a separate shopfront. The gas lanterns, and the shopfront of number 141 itself, were probably installed when it was the premises of J. W. Ling – advertised in 1879 as ‘the oldest lamp and oil shop in Lowestoft’.⁶¹



Figure 150. 141 High Street as seen in c.1900 when it had an eye-catching shopfront complete with gas lanterns. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1300/72/46/6



Figure 151. 144 High Street – a plain softwood frontage of c.1985. © Historic England DP236918



Figure 152. 144 High Street – an inter-war shopfront of c.1932. © Historic England DP236919

Number **143 High Street** has a modern shopfront with red-brick stallrisers and piers in stretcher bond, square-section softwood window and door frames, and a boxed fascia with scalloped lead flashing (Figure 151). The shopfront appears to date from c.1985 as planning permission for a new shopfront was granted in May that year.⁶²

Number 144 High Street has an inter-war shopfront with central splayed lobby and plate-glass display windows with fairly plain and chunky mouldings (Figure 152). The stallrisers have geometric bronze ventilation grilles and ox-blood red tiles (Figure 153), whilst the lobby floor has geometric black and white marble tiles and holes for a shop gate. The door is quite broad, with square multi-paned glazing and a rectangular fanlight. The fascia is quite narrow with a simple cornice and narrow consoles with guttae.



Figure 153. Geometric bronze ventilation grilles are set into ox-blood red tiled stallrisers at 144 High Street. © Historic England DP236921

The shoe firm Stead & Simpson had a shop at 144 High Street from 1889 until 1932 and generally favoured a house style which included their name set into the lobby floor. The later style of details on the present shopfront and the lack of Stead & Simpson branding suggest it dates from the arrival of the International Tea Company, following their move from 119 High Street in c.1932.



Figure 154. 145 High Street – an early post-war design of c.1947 with minimal details. © Historic England DP247584

Figure 155. Geometric bronze ventilation grilles are set into polished granite stallrisers at 145 High Street. © Historic England DP236922



Number **145 High Street** was also used by the International Tea Company and again has a central lobby with display windows (Figure 154) and bronze ventilation grilles in the stallrisers (Figure 155). The shopfront of number 145 is, however, a more modern and minimalist design than that of number 144, with black granite stallrisers and rather scant softwood window frames, a flat fascia and plain pilasters – there is no cornice or consoles, and only a very narrow ventilation strip to the window heads. A newspaper clipping from 1979 records that the store was rebuilt in 1947 following the bombing of the earlier International Tea Company store at 54 High Street.⁶³



Later alterations make the shopfront of **147 High Street** hard to date, but certain features appear to be Victorian, including the projecting cornice, shallow fascia, panelling to the

Figure 156. The thin but deeply projecting cornice of 147 High Street and the proportions of the window openings relate to its history as a butcher's shop. © Historic England DP247585

central doorway and brackets above the southern doorway (Figure 156). Other features, such as the windows and the remaining brackets, are modern additions or replacements. The deep projection of the cornice and the proportions of the northern window are similar to those at 134 High Street and trade directories reveal that it too was a butcher's shop, with a butcher (or butcher and fishmonger) trading continuously from number 147 between 1823 and 1963.



Figure 157. 149 High Street retains an almost complete shopfront of c.1870. © Historic England DP247587

Number **149 High Street** is grade II listed and has a deep splayed central lobby with arch-headed display windows, with simple colonettes and spandrels and narrow fluted pilasters and corbels, suggesting a date of c.1870 (Figure 157). A photograph from the 1960s (Figure 158) shows deeply-angled stallboards (since clad with mosaic tiles). These were inscribed with 'brilliant' V-cut and gilded lettering, as was the fascia. George Stebbings, wine merchant, is first listed at 149 High Street in 1858, but the shopfront appears to be a little later.



Figure 158. 149 High Street, c.1960. Now hidden, it is possible that the surviving fascia and stallboard retain the 'brilliant' lettering seen here. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1504/1/4/2 (detail)

The shopfront of **151-152 High Street** is a recent and poorly proportioned design, with oversized consoles, roughly fluted pilasters and a deep fascia (Figure 159). The design appears to date from 1992, when permission for new shopfronts was granted.⁶⁴

The north-west section of the High Street, from the Town Hall northwards, underwent a dramatic change in 1897-1900, with the widening of the road necessitating the wholesale demolition of properties. This included the Town Hall, which was rebuilt on an enlarged plot in 1899,



Figure 159. 151-152 High Street is an example of a modern shopfront with unsympathetically executed and proportioned 'traditional' elements. © Historic England DP247588

spreading northwards to subsume what had been 154 High Street, a fish merchant in 1896, and the Anchor Brewery Stores public house.⁶⁵ The tall stallriser and arch-headed windows of the Anchor are visible on the left of Figure 160, taken in c.1885, with the closed-up corner shopfront of Victoria House beyond. This was occupied by J. B. Cooper, draper and milliner, in 1896.



Figure 160. A photograph taken in c.1885 shows the buildings (on the left) where Lowestoft Town Hall now stands, including the Anchor public house and Victoria House. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1300/72/44/56

The former building at 160 High Street (now the site of the Anchor Hotel) was occupied by Howard Bunn, naturalist and tobacconist. Figure 161 shows the shopfront fairly clearly, with a central doorway flanked by six-paned windows, low rendered stallrisers painted with 'Naturalist' and 'Tobacconist' and a small

rectangular lobby, no more than the depth of the step. Above the door was a rectangular fanlight and a narrow fascia under a deeply projecting cornice with no consoles. These features and the very slender pilasters suggest an early Victorian date.



Figure 161. An undated photograph of c.1887 shows the early Victorian shopfront of 160 High Street before it was demolished for the widening of the High Street. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 563/1/8



The former properties at 171 and 173 High Street are visible in a photograph taken in 1887 (Figure 162). Number 171 was in use by Sam Cook, a baker, by 1830 and continued to trade until the property was demolished in c.1898. The bakery cannot be said to have had a true shopfront but it did have a very early Victorian shop window with multiple small panes and deep, narrow glazing bars. Number 173, later the Garden Tavern, was owned by a beer retailer in the 1860s and had medium-sized panes of glass with a narrow fascia, cornice and pilasters typical of the early Victorian period.

Figure 162. 171 and 173 High Street as seen in 1887. Number 171 has an early Victorian shop window, whilst the tavern at 173 also has multi-paned windows. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 1300/72/44/54 (detail)

The 'Corporation Buildings' now standing at **167-176 High Street** were built in 1899 following the widening of the High Street and were designed as shops with housing above (Figure 163). During work on number 172 in 1982, an old shop sign for C. Parr & Son was discovered behind the fascia (Figure 164). The sign appears to be gilded and covered in glass, as one might expect from a gilder and picture framer, and is a high-quality example of Edwardian signage, but its presence here is something of a mystery as it appears to have been designed for 25 High Street. The glazing of the shopfront pictured in Figure 164 is a post-war design but no trace of the shopfront survives today. The upper two rows of brickwork immediately beneath the oriel window, with a shaped band and then a row of headers, are identifiable but the rest has been removed and infilled with modern bricks.



Figure 163. 172-176 High Street, part of Corporation Buildings. Built in 1899 as shops with residential accommodation above, nearly all traces of historic shopfronts have been lost. © Historic England DP247589



Figure 164. An Edwardian sign for C. Parr & Son was uncovered at 171 High Street in 1982 but appears to have been moved there following the Second World War. SROL: 1176/1/14/3/8/97. Reproduced by kind permission of the Lowestoft Journal

SUMMARY

Many shops on Lowestoft's High Street were designed with a particular trade in mind and the layout of shopfronts often gave a clue to the type of goods on sale within, whilst the choice of materials and styles was largely determined by the period of construction, local availability and changes in fashions.

Nationally, shifting retail habits meant that many specialist stores such as drapers, haberdashers, furriers, hatters, tailors, fishmongers and butchers were subsumed by department stores, multiples and supermarkets in the second half of the 20th century. The increase in online shopping in the 21st century has continued to put pressure on many small stores, and those trades and services less affected by online competition – including charity shops, cafés and hairdressers – have come to dominate the High Street. Jewellers and chemists remain notable exceptions and often continue to use their traditional form of shop but, by and large, small businesses have suffered and the shops that housed them have had to become more flexible in layout and design in order to attract tenants. As such, historic shopfronts are constantly under pressure. Surprisingly large numbers of 19th-century shopfronts have survived in varying degrees of completeness; the rarer shopfronts are those from the inter-war years and the 1950s and 1960s, which are perhaps less readily recognised as being of historic and aesthetic value.⁶⁶

Lowestoft's High Street was no exception. Dominated by small-scale grocers, fruiterers, fishmongers, butchers, outfitters, drapers and craftsmen in the mid-19th century, the High Street largely provided for the needs of local residents. Lowestoft prospered in the years following the coming of the railway in 1847 and newspapers reported a 'mania' of improvement, with 22 new shopfronts installed on the High Street in just a few years.⁶⁷ Those of Clarke & Co., Devereux & Co., Abbot, Chaston and Bloomfield were singled out as being 'very splendid' in 1851 but little is known about their location or form. Clarke & Co. may refer to the grocer A. S. Clarke who rebuilt 124 High Street in 1864; Devereux & Co could refer either to John Devereux at 128 High Street or to James & Thomas Devereux at 54 High Street; Abbot may be a misspelling of Abbott and could refer to either a grocer at 72 and 73 High Street or to a tailor at 83 High Street; no evidence of Bloomfield has been found at all. Only Chaston's premises can be identified with any certainty – John Browne Chaston was a woollen and linen draper at 45 High Street from at least 1844 until 1855 and the frame for this shop, consisting of the cornice, pilasters and fascia with distinctive scooped ends, still survives.

From the 1860s onwards, retailers began to design purpose-built shops with a clear view to the aesthetic qualities of the shopfronts and it is these later Victorian designs which typify the style of shopfronts we see in Lowestoft today. Some of the earliest known are 54 High Street (c.1863), 99 High Street (1866) and 124 High Street (1864). Notably, all three were designed by W. O. Chambers, and all were designed for grocery and provisions merchants. William Oldham Chambers, a local architect who was born in 1835 and appointed a Fellow of the RIBA in 1875, clearly played an important role in the design of Lowestoft's High Street.⁶⁸ Chambers designed a large number of properties in Lowestoft, including no fewer than eight shops on the

High Street between c.1863 and 1889, many of which survive to a greater or lesser degree. All of the surviving designs by W. O. Chambers show considerable variation in the styles and materials used, but tend to favour more traditional classical elements and capitals as well as narrow fascias and low stallrisers, with arched heads or curved corners to windows. Other architects designing shopfronts on the High Street include George Glover in the 1870s, W. J. Roberts from c.1889 to 1903, and F. W. Richards from c.1890 to 1902; unfortunately not enough examples of their work survive to draw meaningful conclusions regarding their preferred styles.

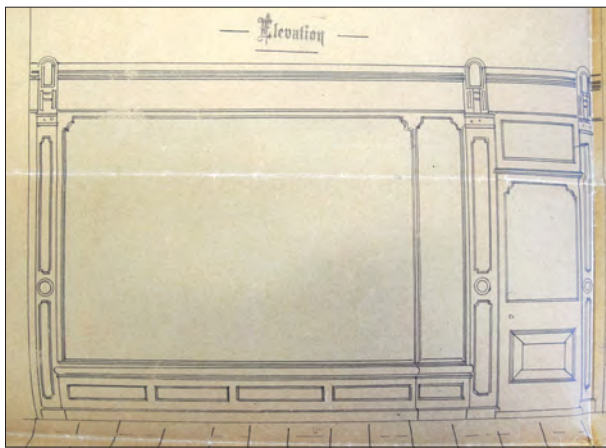
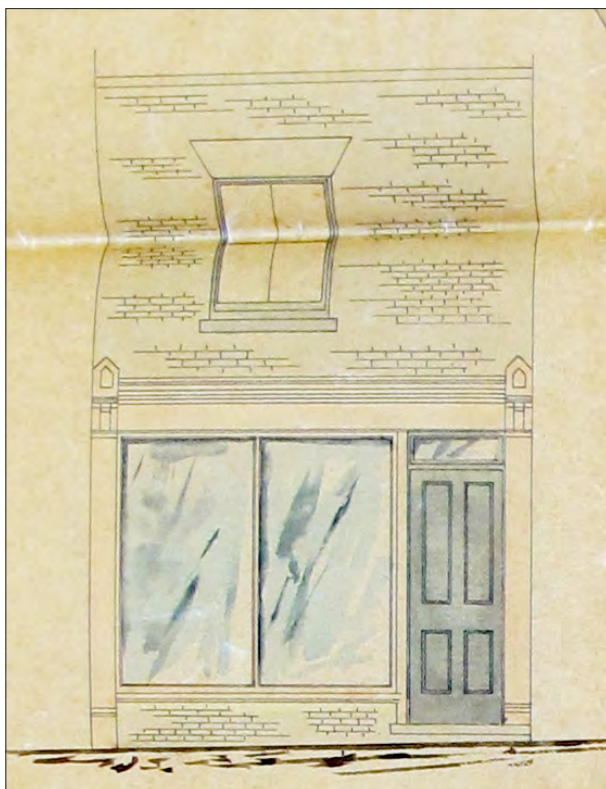


Figure 165. Designs for 8 Bevan Street East, Lowestoft (since demolished), by F. J. Richards in 1890 include elements previously seen at 56 High Street, designed in 1889 by W. J. Roberts and W. O. Chambers. SROL: 334/151 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council



Local examples of dated Victorian shopfronts demonstrate a continuity of design and how certain features were favoured. The use of short double brackets to consoles, occasionally applied directly to the fascia where they were used to define a side entrance, appears to be a common feature in Lowestoft in the period c.1890 to 1900. Number 9 North Place/8 Bevan Street East (Figure 165) was designed by F.W. Richards in 1890 and the style of the double-bracketed consoles, and the use of a central circle motif on the pilasters, is immediately identifiable as being similar to those at 56 High Street (see Figure 55), designed by W. O. Chambers and W. J. Roberts in 1889. Number 175 London Road North was designed in 1890 by W. J. Roberts (Figure 166) and shows an apparently unrealised design for a very modest shop with a plain plate-glass window divided by a simple vertical glazing bar and a side doorway set flush with the window; the one detail is the use of short double brackets to the consoles. Other examples of double brackets dating to around 1900 may be seen

Figure 166. Apparently unrealised plans by W. J. Roberts in 1890 to convert a house to a shop at 175 London Road North, Lowestoft. The use of short double brackets to consoles is a notable local feature around this time. SROL: 334/193 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council

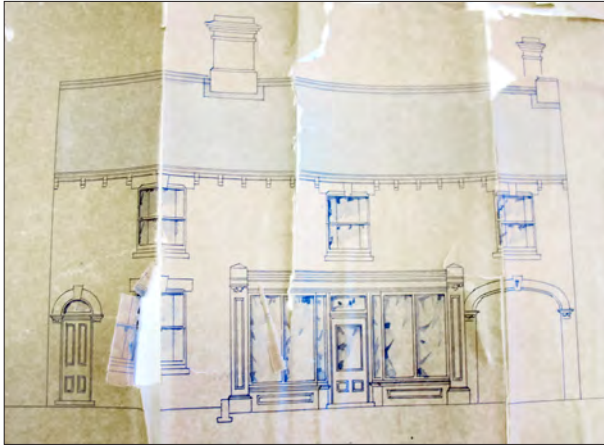
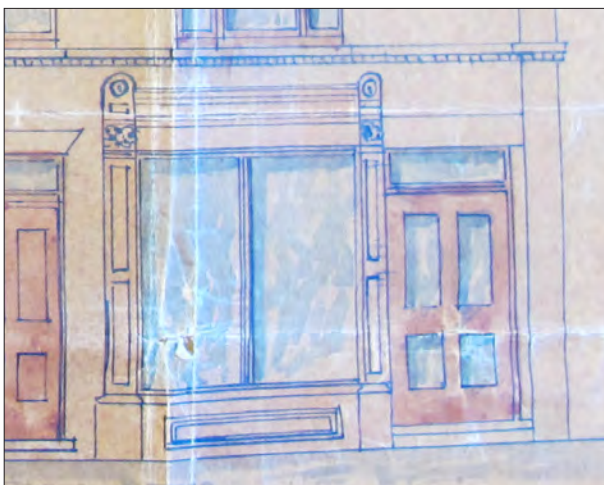


Figure 167. An 1878 design for a house and bake office at 118 Raglan Street, Lowestoft. SROL: 540/36/3/24 (detail). Reproduced courtesy of East Suffolk Council



Figure 168. Substantial elements of the original 1878 shopfront survive at 118 Raglan Street, Lowestoft. © 2019 Google Streetview. Image Capture: Aug 2016.



on several shopfronts on Lowestoft's High Street (e.g. 67 High Street, 113-114 High Street).

An 1878 design survives for a house and bake office at 118 Raglan Street, Lowestoft (Figure 167). The shopfront is simple, with triangular tops to the consoles, a splayed lobby and a vertical glazing bar to the plate-glass windows. Whilst modern security shutters obscure the entrance and glazing, it is clear that substantial elements of the shopfront at 118 Raglan Street survive (Figure 168) and that it was built largely as shown in the drawings, although the detail on the pilasters was changed. Another example of a local shopfront from the 1870s can be seen in Figure 169. The 1877 design for a shopfront at 27 Toning Street, Lowestoft, again has a simple vertical glazing bar dividing the plate glass in the display windows. Whilst earlier shopfronts generally had smaller panes of glass, large sheets of glass continued to be very expensive and smaller businesses (e.g. 46 High Street and 52 High Street) continued to favour several smaller panes well into the early years of the 20th century.

Business owners also played an important role in the design of the High Street, not only commissioning particular styles of shops but also often holding positions of power within the Council. The grocers of Lowestoft appear to have been particularly influential and the larger businesses came to dominate

Figure 169. An 1877 design by Edgar Goff for a modest shopfront at 27 Toning Street, Lowestoft. Reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk Record Office, ref SROL: 540/36/3/22

the High Street in the late 19th century. Adam Swallow Clarke was a grocery and provisions merchant with stores at 90-91 and 124 High Street, both buildings designed by W. O. Chambers, who served with him as a committee member when Clarke was Chairman of the Lowestoft Improvement Commissioners in 1882.⁶⁹ The same committee oversaw the demolition of 124 High Street for the road widening scheme shortly after Clarke sold the property. Even at a smaller scale it was common for one businessman to own several shops on the High Street, either amalgamating the properties or letting them to other trades – as in the case of Thomas Thirtle and later George Hayes at 45, 46 and 47 High Street.

The details of shopfitters were not included on architect's plans for new shops, but a search of trade directories and adverts in local newspapers has revealed several local firms who were likely to have been active on Lowestoft's High Street. J. Blunderfield, builder and contractor of Denmark Road, Lowestoft, was advertising as a shop front and office fitter in 1899, and continued to advertise as such until 1906.⁷⁰ The Lambert Brothers' business was based at Lorne Road in 1900 and they described themselves as 'shop fitters, air tight show case makers, shop front builders, enamelled glass fascia writers, joinery manufacturers & horticultural builders'.⁷¹ W. J. Croft of Raglan Street, Lowestoft, was again a builder who also advertised his work as a shopfront fitter in the *Lowestoft Journal* in 1910.⁷² John Ashby began trading as a builder in Lowestoft in March 1891⁷³ and in 1898 the *Lowestoft Journal* published an article on the extension of Dagmar House, Station Square:

Plans were got out by Mr Charles Crossier, architect, of Victoria Chambers, Lowestoft, and the work was placed in the able hands of Mr John Ashby, builder and contractor, of Woodbury, South Lowestoft, the shop front and most of the fittings being by Samner, of London ... presents a really handsome appearance, with its mahogany and plate glass fittings (some of which were done by Mr Ashby).⁷⁴

John Ashby appears to have continued to develop his skills as a carpenter and shop fitter, advertising himself as such in 1909.⁷⁵ The exterior of Dagmar House (Figure 170) remains largely unaltered with arcaded arch-headed windows separated by

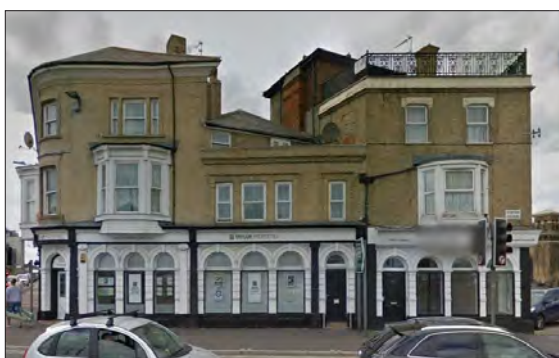


Figure 170. 19-21 Station Square, Dagmar House. The extension (on the right) was designed by Charles Crossier and built by John Ashby in 1898. © 2019 Google Streetview. Image Capture: June 2017



Figure 171. The spandrels of Dagmar House are decorated with a caduceus or staff of Hermes, a symbol of trade and commerce. © Historic England, Katie Carmichael

structural banded pilasters and carved spandrels. The spandrels are decorated with a caduceus or staff of Hermes: a stick entwined by two snakes and surmounted by wings (Figure 171), Hermes being the God of Trade and the caduceus a symbol of commerce.

Shops designed in the Edwardian period are sometimes hard to identify as many were built in a traditional style at the turn of the century. However, a number of shopfronts survive on the High Street which can be more readily identified and demonstrate the beginning of a move away from the traditional Victorian styles previously seen. The flowing floral designs of the stained glass at numbers 131-133 and the consoles of the Maypole Dairy shopfront at 73 High Street hint at the influence of the Art Nouveau movement, whilst the curved glass of 72 and 118 High Street marks a change in the cost and availability of plate glass.

In line with national trends, the inter-war years marked a significant change in the style and materials used for shopfronts on Lowestoft's High Street. Whilst many shopfronts have minor alterations or elements appearing to date from the inter-war period, there are only a small number of substantially or wholly new shopfronts of that date still surviving – these include 136 and 137 High Street (c.1927), 64 High Street (c.1930), 115 High Street (c.1930), 119 High Street (c.1932) and 144 High Street (c.1932). Whilst numbers 119 and 144 are more traditional in style with heavy timber frames, numbers 64, 115, 136 and 137 favour the clean lines and brass details most associated with the period.

The northern end of Lowestoft's High Street was badly damaged by bombing during the Second World War, and a number of shops further south were also lost. The shopfronts built in the decade or so following the war are generally modest with minimal detailing – partly due to a shortage of materials. The deepening of the arcaded lobby of 47 High Street at a time when arcades were felt to waste space is notable, as other examples around the country were being removed rather than extended. Angled lobbies and splayed entrances were commonly used in the 1950s and '60s and several examples can be seen on the High Street, including those at numbers 58, 77-78 and 117. Elsewhere on the High Street entirely new buildings constructed from the 1960s onwards allowed for bolder styles – the salient surrounds of 85-86 and 100 High Street and the sheer massing of 105-106 High Street with its concrete frame marks a very clear break with the traditional brick and timber designs of the past. Shopfronts installed in more recent years have tended towards traditional styles with mixed results. Most attempts to pass as Victorian or Edwardian designs lack the quality of finish seen in original examples and this is especially noticeable in the detail of mouldings, for which technical drawings of a number of original shopfronts (as at 56-57 High Street) survive. In other cases details have been introduced which were not common locally at that date.

The shopfronts which survive on Lowestoft High Street display elements of styles and materials typical of their time, from the 1840s to the present day, whilst the evidence for lost historic shopfronts helps us to understand the character of the High Street over time. A number of rare surviving features have been noted, including the roller shutters at 36 High Street, apparently similar in form to that

recently uncovered at 17 Station Square (Figure 172), and more features of interest are likely to be discovered in time. Every shopfront on Lowestoft's High Street has been altered to a greater or lesser degree since it was built or installed and, in many cases, these layers of change help to document the history of these buildings and their changes in use and fortune over time.



Figure 172. A wooden roller shutter was uncovered at 17 Station Square, Lowestoft, in spring 2019 and may be similar to those just visible at 36 High Street. © Private Collection

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