

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 4.7
2 JUNE 2009	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Cllr P. Hiller - Cabinet Member for Environment	
Contact Officer(s):	Barry Fagg Interim Head of Planning Services Jim Daley - Planning Services Bonnie Kwok – Planning Services	Tel: 01733 453475 Tel: 01733 453522 Tel: 01733 453402

SHOP FORECOURT CANOPIES – OVERVIEW AND DESIGN GUIDELINES

RECOMMENDATIONS	
FROM : Jim Daley - Planning Services Bonnie Kwok – Planning Services	Deadline date :
That Committee:	
1. Supports this design guidance on shop forecourt canopies as amplification of Policy DA21 (Canopies) of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005	

1 PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 Policy DA21 (Canopies) and supporting policies (DA1, DA2 and DA19) allow, subject to appropriate design, the use of shop front canopies, including forecourt canopies. This committee will next consider several planning applications for shop forecourt canopies. At the end of the schedule is a confidential report covering unauthorised canopies elsewhere in the city.
- 1.2 This report is to provide an overview of shop front canopies, particularly the use of fixed forecourt canopies in Peterborough. It also suggests design guidance for those considering the provision of a forecourt canopy to encourage a good quality shopping environment, a pleasant street scene and to maintain residential amenity. This guidance is provided as amplification of Policy DA21 (Canopies) of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005.
- 1.3 This report is for the Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.6.1.5 to be consulted by and comment on the Executive's draft plans which will form part of the Development Plan proposals at each formal stage in preparation.

2 TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
Date for relevant Council meeting	N/A	Date for submission to Government Dept <i>(please specify which Government Dept)</i>	N/A

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Members have previously received reports (25th July 2006 and 5th June 2007) regarding the erection (permitted and unauthorised) of shop front canopies, including shutters to buildings in residential areas of inner city wards.

3.2 Local shops, viability and planning policy support.

Towns and cities, particularly high density inner areas, have a tradition of local corner shops providing convenience shopping serving day-to-day needs. Corner shops are a sustainable form of development and their presence adds to local identity and distinctiveness. The inner city wards, particularly the 'Gladstone area' contain a large number of such shops which serve specific local community needs. They also provide a valuable local service.

Shops are employers as well as vendors. These small grocers and greengrocers act as meeting places and so are important to the social fabric of an area promoting contact and attachment to local neighbourhoods. Officers are mindful of the benefits arising from small local shops in terms of sustainability and as places for social interaction, engendering local distinctiveness and vibrancy. These benefits are also identified in national planning guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 4 (Industrial and commercial development and small firms) and PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development). Officers therefore consider that local shops should be supported.

Many shops have proved to be very adaptable to changing needs, however this has tended to be at the expense of architectural detailing and character. The survival of local shops may require more selling space and the use of a forecourt for the display of goods which in turn has an impact on the character and appearance of the area.

3.3 Shop front canopies

Good shop front design serves two purposes: the first and main one is to attract custom and the second, is to help improve the appearance of the area. Canopies and blinds can provide a lively addition to a street scene if they are designed as an integral part of the shop front.

The main purpose of a shop blind or retractable canopy is to protect perishable goods from strong sunlight and rain and help to keep the interior cool. Traditionally retractable shop blinds were made of canvas with the blind box incorporated into the fascia cornice.

There are relatively few surviving traditional shop fronts of character in Peterborough, particularly outside the city centre. Many traditional timber shop fronts have been replaced with oversized modern aluminium frames and large display windows. Fascia advertisements are often large and of variable quality.

The purpose of a shop forecourt canopy is to protect goods on display from adverse weather.

The photographs at annexe 1 illustrate the variety of blinds and canopies, both fixed and free standing, found in Peterborough.

3.4 Planning permission, planning policy and the tests applied

Planning Permission is required for any material changes in the external appearance of a shop. This may include the installation of a retractable blind or a canopy affixed to the building. Free standing forecourt canopies always require planning permission. (Advertisement Consent is normally required for illuminated signs and signs above ground floor level).

Planning applications for fixed and free standing canopies are assessed under Policy DA21 (Canopies) of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005 which states:

Planning permission for the installation of a fixed canopy will only be granted on the ground floor of a shop, café, or restaurant or public house, but only if it can be installed without detracting from the character of the building or surrounding areas.

Other relevant policies, as appropriate, include DA19 (shop fronts), DA20 (Security Shutters), DA1 (Townscape and Urban Design) and DA2 (The effect of development on the amenities and character of an area) In determining planning applications the local planning authority will evaluate the design and materials against the character and architectural quality of the building; impact on the street scene and impact on residential amenity of adjoining residents. Where a shop has a forecourt to the rear of the footway, planning permission is not required to use this area to be used for the display of goods and in some areas this has become part of the character of an area.

The assessment of applications for fixed forecourt canopies has been informed by two Planning Inspectorate appeal decisions at 42 Cecil Road in 2006 and 2007. It is helpful to consider briefly the issues involved in the second and the guidance this provides.

A retrospective planning application for a fixed forecourt canopy with steel posts supporting a solid roof was refused in 2006 and an appeal dismissed. (the present canopy). A revised planning application in 2007 proposed a roof structure in glass with glass or UPVC end panels was refused, but a subsequent appeal was upheld. The Planning Inspector opined that the principle characteristic of the building was that of a corner shop...“where forecourt selling and display protected by a canopy would not be out of place”. His view was that the principal issue of the appeal was the size and visual impact of the canopy. He concluded that a light and open framework with a glass roof and glass or Upvc end panels would reduce the visual intrusion of the canopy and that the building would still contribute to street scene

The approved canopy has a number of significant elements: the framework is light and open (therefore allowing views through), a glass roof (is transparent); a set back position from the footway; a building (and shop) of plain appearance which continue to contribute to the street scene.

Cecil Road and the surrounding streets comprise mainly detached and semi-detached houses built to strong building lines with short front gardens and boundary enclosure. The street provides a strong horizontal character (walls, building line, footways etc) and a smaller vertical character (building edges). Few features block long and medium distance views. This townscape structure is typical of inner city streets.

Many local shops are located within the Central Ward, and specifically the ‘Gladstone area’ between Bright Street and Exchange Street and Bourges Boulevard and Lincoln Road are similar in character to 42 Cecil Road. There is a strong townscape structure to these streets. There is a consistency of scale and massing of buildings. Generally two storey terraced and semi-detached development with strong building lines set back 2.5 metres from footways. Some terraces are built straight off the street. Mono-pitched single storey front extensions or bays typically project 1.3m. Limited views between properties emphasise the linear character of the street scene. There is uniformity in the strongly horizontal townscape structure. On-street parking further emphasizes strong linear visual ‘corridors’. See ‘Townscape Structure’ diagram below for illustration.



Typical Street-scene



Typical Street-scene with Townscape Structure Analysis

KEY ——— Horizontal lines ——— Vertical lines ■ Visual blockage

The majority of shops in older urban areas are in narrow fronted properties in linear terraced streets that have a strong vertical and horizontal emphasis. Other properties adjoining these premises, allow the horizontal and vertical emphasis to be carried along the street. (See sketch below)

In streets with a strong linear character solid features which project significantly forward of the building line, such as canopies which are oversized; have permanent sides and front enclosures interrupt views and are often visually intrusive. A forecourt canopy with appropriately designed elements and proportions and no side or front enclosures would allow open views and avoid harm to the street scene as concluded by the Planning Inspector at Cecil Road. .

Since the appeal decision a refinement on this design has been made and an application approved under delegated authority at 160 Gladstone Street (not yet implemented). The design guidelines below would further improve on the evolving design.

Carefully designed canopies that adhere to certain principles and respect the structural form and character of the building and retain an open appearance are considered unlikely to detract from the character of an area and thus to be in accordance with Policy DA21 of the Local Plan. A canopy with a minimum 18 degree roof pitch would also have the benefit of minimising the opportunity for fascia advertising and improve the appearance of buildings.

3.5 **General design principals for fixed forecourt canopies**

In considering the design of a forecourt canopy the starting point will always be a study of the building facade and adjacent elevations. Careful consideration must be given as to whether the existing building appearance should be retained without a fixed canopy.

Each planning application will be considered on its own merits, taking account of the guidelines below. There is no 'one size fits all' design for canopies and many different options have been considered, but the design suggested below appears to Officers to be the best starting point for most inner city shops with forecourts and will reflect the decisions made by Planning Inspectors.

For a plain building with little architectural detailing a 'standard' canopy is likely to be the appropriate starting point. A building with significant architectural detailing should be reflected in the canopy design. Canopies designed to a common framework have a distinctive and appearance. It is considered that such designs would enhance the typical shop, avoid harm to the street scene and respect residential amenity and act as an advert themselves, thus minimizing the need for advertising.

A well designed canopy can therefore be described as:

- **Style**
Of a style in keeping with the age, character and architectural detailing of the building as a whole.
- **Scale and Height**
Have scale and height in proportion with the building. It should only extend over the essential shop front (including the shop door) and remains clear of any separate residential entrance and sit no higher than 75mm below the bottom first floor window cills.
- **Roof Pitch**
Have a roof pitch not less than 18 degrees and be formed of clear or 'wire' safety glass with metal glazing bars. This will allow light to reach the enclosed shop, is a durable weatherproof material that is easy to maintain and deteriorates little with age.
- **Dimensions**
Have its outer edge, including supports, set back at least 500mm from the back edge of the footway so that it is not obstructed and overall project no further than 3 metres from the building and have a minimum clearance above ground level of 2.16m.
- **Residential amenity**
Situating a sufficient distance from any adjoining residential property to avoid loss of amenity or character.
- **Materials**
Have a metal supporting frame and round posts with no rainwater goods. Posts will be located into the ground and not bolted.
- **Sides**
Have no permanent side panels or shutters as they create a hostile environment, harm the street scene, and attract graffiti. The use of removable side awnings of canvas or similar material may be used to shield goods from sun and rain.

- **Advertising**

Where there is no fascia to the building, or it is removed to accommodate the canopy roof then a 150mm high non illuminated fascia can be integrated into the structure to advertise the name of the shop and the street number.

The above criteria should appear as headings in any 'Design and Access Statement' accompanying a planning application. These criteria are illustrated by the sketches at annexe 2.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Member support for this design guidance on shop forecourt canopies will:

- amplify policy DA21 (Canopies) of the Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement) 2005
- provide specific planning advice which will be used as design guidance and assist in achieving the Council's aim of improved design standards and the delivery of a high quality planning service.
- have a significant impact on the enhancement of the city by ensuring that new shop forecourt canopies are both appropriate to their context and of demonstrable quality.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- Do nothing - this would not achieve Council's aim of improved design standards and the delivery of a high quality planning service and local environment.
- Do not approve further planning applications for fixed forecourt canopies – This can only be achieved through a review of the Development Plan documents. It is your officers opinion that this option would not be supported by GoEast. Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) (Delivering Sustainable Development) sets out the Government's overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. Such a policy approach would be contrary to the aim of promoting the development of socially cohesive communities and planning for sustainable development. It is therefore unlikely to be supported on appeal and thus is unsustainable in the long term.

6 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no specific financial implications for the City Council identified in this report.
- 6.2 Continuing with the rather 'ad hoc' approach of the past to dealing with fixed forecourt canopies has implications for the city council in terms of resources for constant enforcement action, conflict with shopkeepers, and general harm to the economy of the City arising from uncertainty for businesses. The use of a shop forecourt for the display of goods is an advantage for many shops and in some areas is part of the character of an area. The use of a well designed forecourt canopy, following the designs suggested in this report, appears to Officers to be a practical way forward for most inner city shops with forecourts. This approach would help encourage a good quality shopping environment, maintain a pleasant street scene, respect residential amenity and reflect the decisions made by Planning Inspectors.

7 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)
Planning Inspectorate Appeal Decisions APP/J0540/A006/200733/NWF and APP/J0540/A/07/2035385 both 42 Cecil Road, Peterborough
P & EP Committee report E1 25 July 2006 (canopies)
P & EP Committee report E1 5 June 2007

Annexe 1

Blinds and canopies in Peterborough



Retractable roller blinds



Market stall type

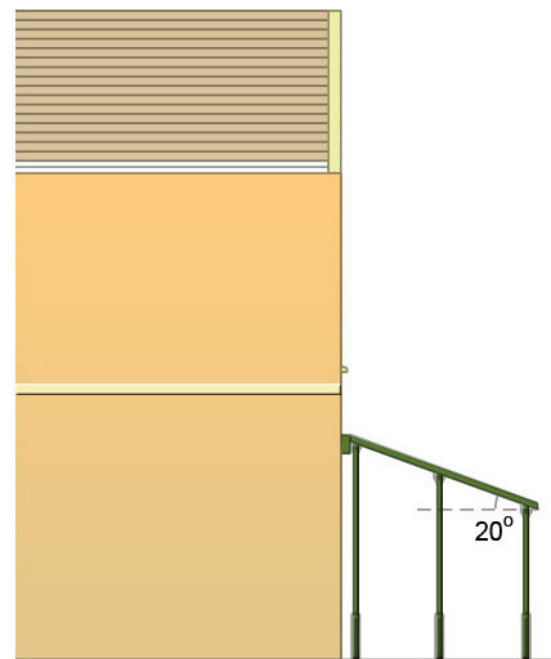


**Fixed or retractable
'Dutch' canopy**



Fixed forecourt

Preferred Forecourt Canopy



58

Existing Elevation with oversized fascia

Preferred Forecourt Canopy

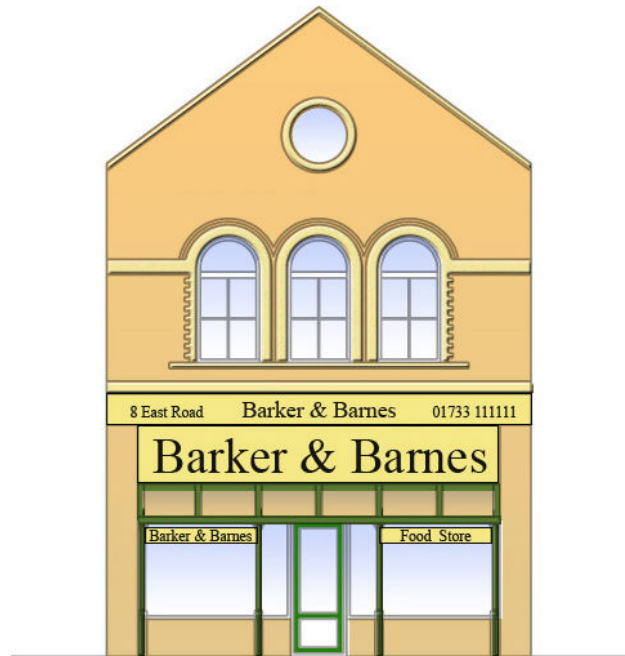
Preferred Forecourt Canopy side elevation



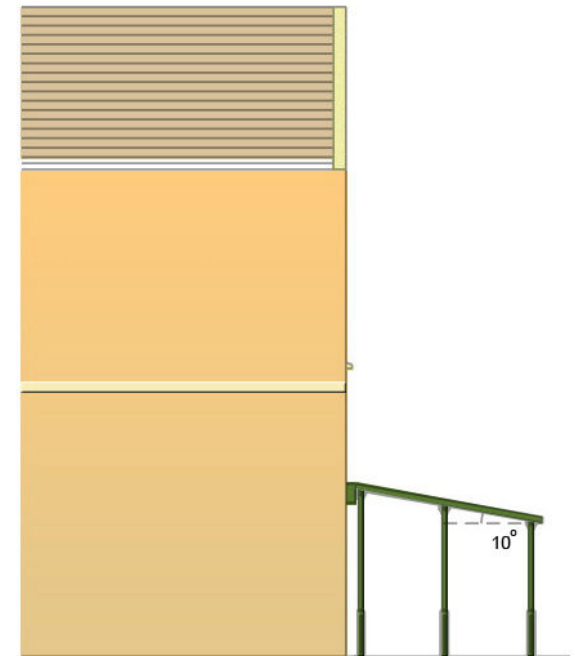
Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia



Existing Elevation with oversized fascia



Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia



Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy side elevation

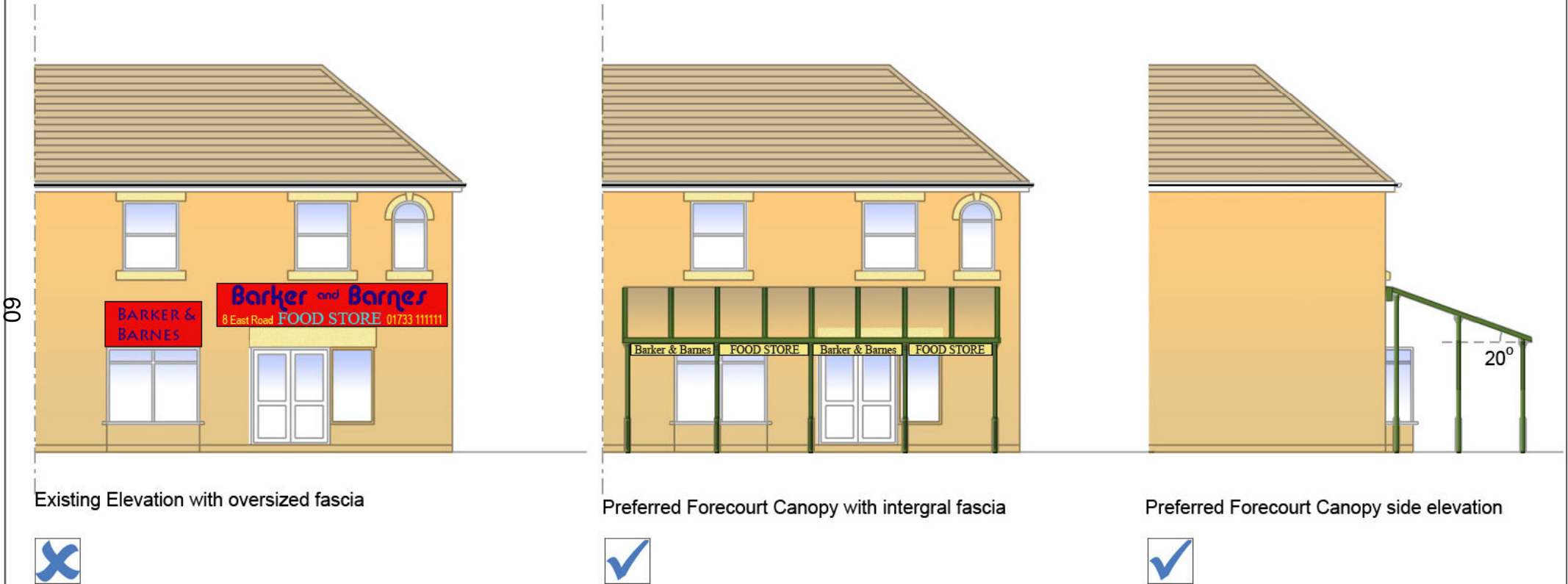


Important note:

This drawing has been prepared solely for reference purpose. It is not suitable for use as a working drawing.

Do not scale off drawing.

Preferred Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia



Existing Elevation with oversized fascia

Preferred Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia

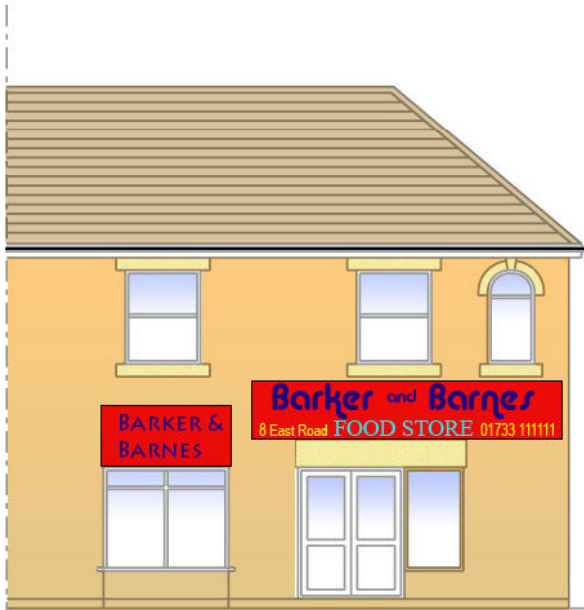
Preferred Forecourt Canopy side elevation

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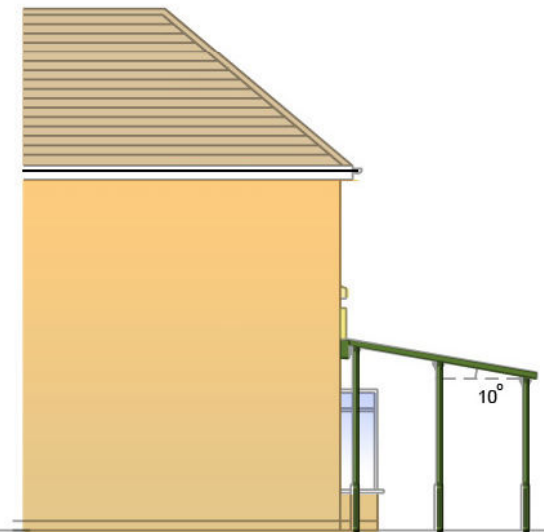
Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia



Existing Elevation with oversized fascia



Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy with intergral fascia



Inappropriate Forecourt Canopy side elevation



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