

11.1	Introduction	181
	Table 11.1: Design Information Required	182
11.2	Landscape Setting	183
	Trees, hedgerows and other Important Landscape Features	183
	Table 11.2: Tree and Hedgerow Regulations	184
11.3	The Scale and Form of Settlements and the Pattern of Streets and Spaces	186
11.4	The Pattern of Uses and Density of Development	187
11.5	Scale and Positioning of Buildings	188
	Privacy, Daylight and General Amenity	189
11.6	Detailed Design and Materials	190
	Lighting Schemes	191
	Shop Fronts and Advertisements	192

## 11. DESIGN AND AMENITY

### LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVE:

Design new developments to maintain and enhance the distinctive local character of West Dorset's towns, villages, countryside and coastline; provide a sense of community and security; and deter crime.

### 11.1 Introduction

- 11.1.1 The design of new development is crucial in ensuring that it fits in with the local character of its surrounds to provide a "sense of place", and the area feels safe, pleasant and attractive - a place where people will want to live, work and socialise.
- 11.1.2 Recent Government guidance has highlighted the importance of good design in new development, and stated that "developments should respond to their local context or reinforce local distinctiveness"<sup>1</sup>. Regional Planning Guidance emphasises the need to maintain local identity and distinctiveness in the rural parts of the South West<sup>2</sup>. The Structure Plan emphasises the need to consider quality in the built environment and to ensure that development makes "a positive contribution to the urban environment and landscape ... through the careful consideration of design, layout and form in relation to the function and setting of the development"<sup>3</sup>. The interests and amenity of local residents, visitors and neighbouring uses should also be taken into account in preparing development plans and determining applications for development<sup>4</sup>.
- 11.1.3 Good design should achieve the following results:
- LEGIBILITY - places which make sense, so that people can recognise where they are, what is public, what is private, and they can find their way round easily;
  - VARIETY - interest within that area, both in terms of appearance and uses, but without introducing friction between neighbouring land uses, be it through loss of privacy or daylight, noise pollution, or other means;
  - VITALITY – places and land uses that encourage people to venture onto the street and other public areas – with a sense of security and well-being, few opportunities for crime (real or perceived); and
  - LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS - places that have their own identity - reflecting local features, complementing the building traditions of the area, and protecting and enhancing locally valued landscape and nature conservation features.
- 11.1.4 As such, design cannot be limited to detailing on buildings. Consideration needs to be given to many issues - the landscape setting, the pattern of streets or blocks and spaces and what uses may take place in these areas, the plot patterns within the block, the scale and positioning of buildings on these plots, as well as what materials are used and what the buildings actually look like.

1 Para. 36, PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005, ODPM

2 Para. 3.73, Regional Planning Guidance for the South West (RPG10), 2001, DETR.

3 Environment Policy H, Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (CSP 28), 2001.

4 Implementation Policy D, op. cit.

- 11.1.5 To ensure design is considered properly in determining planning applications, the District Council will require information about the proposed design of new development, in accordance with the criteria set out in Table 11.1.

Table 11.1: Design Information Required

<b>DESIGN STATEMENTS</b>
<p>The District Council will require that development proposals are accompanied by a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted, as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation.</p> <p>Where the development proposal is complex or large-scale, or involves a sensitive site (including sites within a Conservation Area), this illustrative material should include the wider context and not just the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings. Inclusion of relevant perspective views may be of value.</p> <p>Where the development proposal is straightforward or small-scale, and does not involve a sensitive site, the illustrative material should include, as a minimum, photographs or sketches of the development site and its surroundings, in addition to drawings of the proposed design itself and, where appropriate, plans of the proposed layout in relation to neighbouring development and uses.</p> <p>The District Council will require that development proposals, other than minor applications, are accompanied by either a Landscape Masterplan in the case of outline applications (which seeks to establish a layout or density on a site) or a Detailed Landscape Scheme in the case of full applications. The requirements are summarised below and a check-list for all aspects to be included in the Masterplan / Detailed Landscape Scheme is available on request. The ongoing maintenance and management of any scheme (including woodland and other habitat management requirements if applicable) is essential to ensure it provides a long term contribution to the environment. Schemes must be properly maintained and a Management Plan may be required as part of an application or as a reserved matter, to cover future long term management needs.</p> <p><b>Landscape Masterplan</b> - particularly important for applications on prominent and large sites, in the AONB and in the 9 particularly sensitive and/or vulnerable Landscape Character areas. (Chalk Uplands; Chalk Valley Slope; Coastal Slope, Chesil and Fleet; Chalk Escarpment; Limestone Escarpment; Marshwood Vale Slope; Powerstock Hills; Ridge and Vale; and West Dorset Cliffs and Undercliffs).</p> <p>The main elements of the Masterplan should be:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. A site survey of existing features to include levels.</li><li>2. Details of the existing features of landscape, amenity or nature conservation interest on the site.</li><li>3. The site context and its constraints to determine areas for development potential and areas for development constraint.</li><li>4. Methods for retaining and conserving important site features.</li></ol> <p><b>Detailed Landscape Scheme</b> - to add detail to the Masterplan in terms of 'hard' and 'soft' (planting) landscape proposals as well as boundary treatment. The size, species and position of trees and shrubs will also be required as will maintenance requirements which will include as a minimum a 24 month maintenance schedule. In the case of outline applications, the details of the Landscape Scheme will be made a reserved matter.</p>

## 11.2 Landscape Setting

- 11.2.1 Understanding the landscape setting is important in ensuring new development is in keeping with the character of the local area – how it is perceived, its variety and distinctiveness. Consideration needs to be given not only to topography, watercourses, vegetation and wildlife, but also the history of human interaction with the landscape (including any historical or cultural associations), aesthetic and sensory qualities (such as the visual enjoyment of colours, textures, scale, diversity, views and enclosures and the associated sounds and smells), and also how these features are perceived as a whole.
- 11.2.2 The Structure Plan proposes that development should respect the particular characteristics of the local landscape and conserve and enhance the natural and man-made features that contribute to the character of the county<sup>5</sup>.
- 11.2.3 In addition to the designations that identify specific areas of landscape importance (see Policy SA6), the District Council believes that due regard should be given to the impact of development on the local landscape throughout West Dorset and, where possible, the potential to restore or strengthen features of local interest to provide a high quality environment accessible to the local population. (see Policy SA3 Landscape Character Areas).

### Trees, hedgerows and other Important Landscape Features

- 11.2.4 Landscape features, such as trees, hedgerows, streams and boundary walls, contribute to the visual enjoyment and distinctiveness of the local landscape, help to maintain the variety and diversity of plant and wildlife, can provide visual clues in people's perceptions of their surroundings (such as avenues of trees demarcating an important or ancient thoroughfare) as well as providing other benefits (such as screening out noise and unsightly development, providing shelter, recreation and filtering pollution). Some features – such as trees - are particularly vulnerable to damage during development (as a result of ground compaction, changes in soil or water levels, or the installation of underground services). In the longer term, as trees grow in size, the inappropriate siting of new development too close to trees can also threaten their retention.
- 11.2.5 Government guidance acknowledges that landscape design is an integral part of urban design<sup>6</sup>, and trees and hedgerows are now subject to specific regulations (see Table 11.2). The Structure Plan provides that development should result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms<sup>7</sup>.

5 Environment Policy F, Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (CSP 28), 2001.

6 Guidance is provided on Pages 76 – 77, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR

7 Environment Policy F, Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Structure Plan (CSP 28), 2001.

Table 11.2: Tree and Hedgerow Regulations

It is the duty of the local planning authority, when granting planning permission for development, to ensure that adequate provision is made for the preservation and planting of trees<sup>8</sup>. Trees may be worthy of preservation for their intrinsic beauty or for their contribution to the landscape, or because they serve to screen an eyesore or future development. The value of trees may be enhanced by their scarcity. To this end, the District Council has the power to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) when it is expedient to do so in the interests of amenity. Other factors (such as importance as a wildlife habitat) may be taken into account. When in force, a TPO will protect trees and woodland from being cut down, lopped, uprooted, wilfully damaged or destroyed without the consent of the planning authority. In addition, anyone proposing to cut down, top, lop or uproot or wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a Conservation Area that is not covered by a TPO is required to give six weeks' notice of their intention before the work is carried out.

In June 1997, the Hedgerow Regulations came into force<sup>9</sup>, allowing local planning authorities to protect hedgerows for the first time. The District Council can now prohibit the removal of "important" hedgerows. Such hedgerows are defined as being in existence for 30 years or more, and satisfying at least one of the criteria specified under Schedule 1 (eg: the hedgerow marks an historic parish boundary, incorporates an archaeological feature or contains certain species). A hedgerow defined as "important" under these regulations is a material planning consideration.

- 11.2.6 The District Council believes that the setting of new development – its hard and soft landscape treatment - should be considered in the layout design from the start, to ensure that existing features of merit are retained, the resulting layout integrates seamlessly with its surrounds and the space reflects its public / private function. Additional protection is given in those cases where an endangered (protected) species may be present (cross-refer to Policy SA12).
- 11.2.7 A survey of the site's context, landscape setting and existing features, incorporated into an appropriate Landscape Masterplan or Design Scheme, will be required (see Table 11.1) to identify existing features of merit and their current condition, as well as more detailed landscape treatment and management proposals. In particular, the District Council recognises the important contribution which woodlands, trees and hedgerows make to both the rural and urban landscape, and will seek to ensure that those of merit<sup>10</sup> are sympathetically incorporated into the layout of development proposals and safeguarded during construction<sup>11</sup>. Where development sites have significant tree cover, the Council will require an arboricultural survey of the site in order to assess the potential impact of the development. To assist in this process, the Council will be updating its guidance for developers relating to trees on development sites, setting out what will be expected.

<sup>8</sup> S197 to 214D of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice, 2000, DETR

<sup>9</sup> Hedgerows Regulations 1997 S.I. 1997 No. 1160 (enabled through the Environment Act 1995 s.97)

<sup>10</sup> Evaluation of trees and hedgerows will be based upon a range of factors, including their: aesthetic value (including any historic or commemorative value); form; health / life expectancy; size; position in the landscape and relation to setting; and whether they provide a screen or soften the visual impact of existing or proposed structures in the near vicinity (further guidance can be found in the Arboricultural Association's Guidance Note 4: Amenity Valuation of Trees and Woodland)

<sup>11</sup> Further guidance on trees is provided in BS 5837:2005 Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations

- 11.2.8 Only in those cases where the loss of important landscape features would be compensated for with new landscape treatment which would result in a net benefit to the landscape, character and amenity of the site and surrounding area, will their removal be considered. Where necessary, additional planting and/or other landscape elements will be required to integrate the development into the local landscape. Where new planting is needed, native species are preferred, as this will usually integrate more successfully with the local landscape character and will be of greater benefit to local wildlife. Implementation of proposed planting schemes will be expected to commence in the next available planting season following implementation of the development or in accordance with an agreed timetable specified as part of the Detailed Landscape Scheme. Where extensive development is proposed on what is currently a greenfield site, for example in connection with sites allocated for development as part of this Plan, the District Council will encourage the land owner or developer to carry out structural tree and shrub planting, well in advance of development commencing on the site. Such advanced planting, once established, can help to ameliorate the visual impact of the development upon the wider landscape.
- 11.2.9 The consideration of new servicing/infrastructure requirements (such as cabling, street signage, kerbs, bollards etc) should be incorporated within the overall landscape design.

### **POLICY DA1 RETENTION OF TREES, HEDGEROWS AND OTHER IMPORTANT LANDSCAPE FEATURES**

Development will provide for the retention and protection of existing woodland, trees and hedgerows and other features of merit where their removal would significantly harm the character or enjoyment of the site or surrounding area, or prejudice or damage wildlife interests. Details and method statements for this retention and protection will be submitted as part of a Landscape Masterplan or Detailed Landscape Plan (see table 11.1).

### **POLICY DA2 LANDSCAPE SCHEMES**

Development will provide sufficient hard and soft landscape treatment before or within a reasonable timescale of its implementation, to successfully integrate with the character of the site and its surrounding area. Details of the hard and soft landscape treatment and an implementation programme will be submitted as part of a Landscape Masterplan or Detailed Landscape Plan (see table 11.1).

- 11.2.10 The District Council offers advice on woodland management and the main sources of grant aid for new tree planting. The Council's own environmental enhancement grant scheme will target priority areas identified in the Council's "Framework for Action in the Countryside 2004 - 2009"<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Framework for Action in the Countryside was adopted by West Dorset District Council in November 2004 as an implementation plan for the West Dorset countryside, covering the period 2004 - 2009.

### 11.3 The Scale and Form of Settlements and the Pattern of Streets and Spaces

- 11.3.1 The towns and villages of West Dorset are unique and distinctive in their form, structure and scale. This distinctiveness derives from the way that human settlement and occupation has shaped and adapted the natural features of the sites of our towns and villages in response to a range of constraints and opportunities to meet the economic and community needs of successive generations. It also derives from how those settlements still relate to the landscape in which they are set. New development should be of such a scale and form that it seeks to optimise the potential of a site to accommodate development, without unacceptably compromising local distinctiveness.
- 11.3.2 Within settlements the relationship between buildings on plots and the streets and open spaces not only impacts on the ease of movement through an area but also helps to define the local character, how the form and function of the area is perceived, and the level of interaction (both visual and physical) between public and private spaces. (Cross-refer to Policy TRAN2 in Chapter 9).
- 11.3.3 Many of these patterns are a legacy of the gradual historic development of the area. Some patterns remain from key stages in a settlement's development, for example, the long, narrow plot patterns found in the South West Quadrant of Bridport derive from their use as rope walks, where the staple production of lines, twines and ropes were manufactured in long narrow gardens at the back of houses and the pattern of development within central Dorchester is very much influenced by its Roman origins.
- 11.3.4 The street pattern or block structure is generally configured to provide direct and convenient routes for movement and make efficient use of land<sup>13</sup>. The block size and the width and configuration of roads and pavements that bisect them, and how the roads and pavement relate to each other and adjoining buildings, also influences how the street scene is perceived<sup>14</sup>. The proximity and density of buildings and their relationship to the street, the placement of key landmark buildings, the use of planting (such as avenues of trees) and boundary walls or fences all can have a marked impact on the character of the area and sense of enclosure. The variety of size of gardens is also important in determining the character of an area and must be taken into account when planning applications for intensification of development are considered.
- 11.3.5 The District Council considers that it is important that these factors are respected, if the character, legibility and enjoyment of the area are to be ensured. Where development is proposed within the core areas of the District's towns and large villages, or fronting onto main routes into these areas, the positioning and design of development (including boundary treatment) should provide a strong sense of enclosure of the public realm. Blank walls, high boundary fences or service yards facing onto public spaces should be avoided, particularly in places where there is much activity on the streets. Service / rear access arrangements need to be considered in terms of their vulnerability to crime.

<sup>13</sup> Pages 42 - 47, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR advises that a perimeter block structure is generally successful in meeting many of the objectives of good design

<sup>14</sup> Pages 29-30 and 49, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR provides examples of how tracking can be used in design to help define the pattern of spaces and manage traffic effectively, and the need for consideration of street widths and enclosure.

**POLICY DA3 THE SCALE AND FORM OF SETTLEMENTS AND THE PATTERN OF STREETS AND SPACES**

Within existing settlements, development will be permitted provided that:

- i) it seeks to optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, and
- ii) local distinctiveness is not unacceptably compromised by the proposal.

Development will not be permitted in gaps where these allow important public views into, within or out of a settlement, or where it would involve the loss of an important area of open space or feature which is an essential part of the character of the locality or wider settlement.

There is no policy DA4.

## 11.4 The Pattern of Uses and Density of Development

11.4.1 The patterns of use in an area – including the density of development – help to establish the character of individual areas. Again, many of these patterns are a legacy of the gradual historic development of the area, where there is a general decrease in the density of development and variety of uses as the distance from the central / core areas of towns and villages increases. Mixed use areas are important in maintaining vitality as they allow people the opportunity to live close to their work and other daily needs, increase opportunities for social interaction, and are unlikely to become deserted at specific times of the day, reducing the likelihood of crime or vandalism. These benefits are recognised in Government guidance<sup>15</sup>.

11.4.2 Where development is required on large sites (and also in the incremental redevelopment of existing areas), the District Council will encourage high-quality, mixed-use design. Such developments will be expected to encompass the following qualities:

- compactness;
- a mixture of uses and dwelling types, including affordable housing;
- a range of employment, leisure and community facilities;
- appropriate infrastructure and services;
- high standards of urban design;
- access to public open space and green spaces; and
- ready access to public transport.

<sup>15</sup> Para. 35, PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005, ODPM and para. 4, Planning Out Crime, Circular 5/94, 1994, DoE and also page 34, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR

11.4.3 Government guidance states that local planning authorities should promote the more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings.<sup>16</sup> Local planning authorities should avoid developments which make inefficient use of land (those of less than 30 dwellings per hectare net) particularly in places with good public transport accessibility.<sup>17</sup> The District Council will, therefore, encourage the more efficient use of land. As a guide, where new development is proposed within DDBs, densities in the range of 30 -50 dwellings per hectare will be sought, and higher densities (up to 100 dwellings per hectare) will be expected on sites in the town centres of Dorchester, Bridport and Sherborne. The District Council will encourage increased densities whilst also seeking to protect any particular special local characteristics that exist such as important open spaces, trees and other landscape features of merit. The village appraisal work, undertaken as part of West Dorset 2000,<sup>18</sup> identifies the special character of areas within and adjoining villages and this should be considered in the design of any new development.

### 11.5 Scale and Positioning of Buildings

11.5.1 The scale and positioning of buildings, and how they relate to surrounding patterns of development, has a bearing on the character of an area and how it functions.<sup>19</sup> Historically, the scale of individual buildings reflected their public function and / or importance, with such buildings as town halls and places of worship built at larger scales than other uses. Such buildings can deviate from the general building line to emphasise their importance, either to dominate the streetscene or stand apart in a defined space. Corner plots (where roads or pathways meet) are often key sites which, if developed close to the front of the plot, help visually define the layout of an area. Buildings on such plots are usually visible from a number of vantage points and provide good sites for landmark buildings, especially where such buildings perform an important function. Sites that terminate a view also need careful consideration and may provide a good location for landmark buildings.

11.5.2 The scale and design of extensions can have a positive or negative impact on the individual character of a building and how it relates to its surroundings. This is particularly noticeable in the roof form, as this reflects the shape and symmetry of the entire building. In general, the extension should be visually subsidiary to the original building if it is to avoid overwhelming the original character of the building and the pitch of any extension should reflect the pitch of the original building.

<sup>16</sup> Para. 27 (viii), PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development, 2005, ODPM

<sup>17</sup> Para. 58, PPG3: Housing, 2000, DETR

<sup>18</sup> "The Survey of the Built and Natural Environment" ("West Dorset 2000")

<sup>19</sup> Page 50, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR provides additional guidance on the setback of dwellings

11.5.3 In considering development proposals, the District Council will seek to ensure that:

- the scale of development (in terms of height, bulk and massing) is in keeping with the traditional buildings within the immediate vicinity of the development and should normally reflect the proposed use (i.e.: houses should look like houses, workshops should look like workshops and so on, landmark buildings should be designed and sited to reflect their importance);
- where there is a strong building line<sup>20</sup>, infill development (including extensions to existing buildings) should continue this regularity, respecting the degree of harmony within the streetscene<sup>21</sup>, unless this is necessary to emphasise the wider importance of the building's function;
- extensions to buildings should respect the character of, and be visually integrated with, the original building.

### POLICY DA5 THE SCALE AND POSITIONING OF BUILDINGS

Development will be required to meet the following criteria:-

- i) the position of the building on its site will respect its relationship with adjoining buildings, routeways, open areas, rivers, streams and other dominant features;
- ii) the scale of the building will respect the scale of, and be in harmony with, the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole, and reflect the purpose for which the building is proposed (unless this would detract from the character of the surrounding area); and
- iii) the design of any alterations or extensions of a building will be such that the proportions respect the character of, and are well related to, the existing building.

### Privacy, Daylight and General Amenity

11.5.4 The amount of privacy and daylight is partly determined by the scale and positioning of new development in relation to adjoining buildings and structures, although other factors – such as the careful arrangement of windows, internal arrangement of accommodation, screening / landscape treatment and proximity to public spaces – also matter. Designing for privacy is recognised in Government guidance as an important design objective in residential areas<sup>22</sup>.

11.5.5 The District Council wishes to ensure that new development is designed to minimise unacceptable overlooking<sup>23</sup> and that neighbouring properties do not overshadow the development, or vice versa, to the extent where the daylight to that property is reduced to unacceptable levels.

<sup>20</sup> As opposed to areas where the positioning of development on plots varies considerably.

<sup>21</sup> For example, where development is characterised by shoulder-to-shoulder development resulting in a built-up frontage that provides a strong sense of enclosure, large openings, such as a petrol station forecourt, may not be appropriate.

<sup>22</sup> Page 53, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR

<sup>23</sup> As a guide, the minimum "back-to-back" distance is taken as 20m, although this needs to be applied flexibly in achieving the various design and sustainability objectives and so each site must be considered on its merits.

- 11.5.6 In some cases, development may result in an increase in activity or noise levels that can not only alter the existing character of an area, but also cause harm to the quiet enjoyment of residential properties and other sensitive developments within it. (see Policy AH8a, Development with potential to generate Pollution, Noise, Vibration or Unpleasant Emissions). Applications for new development, including extensions, alterations and changes of use will, therefore, need to be assessed in terms of activity generation and the impact it will have upon the amenities of existing development and the character of the area.

### **POLICY DA6 PRIVACY, DAYLIGHT AND GENERAL AMENITY**

Proposals for development will only be permitted provided:

- i) they do not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the occupiers of residential properties through loss of privacy;
- ii) they do not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of the occupiers of properties through inadequate daylight or excessive overshadowing; and
- iii) they do not generate a level of activity or noise which detracts significantly from the character and amenity of the area or the quiet enjoyment of residential properties.

## 11.6 Detailed Design and Materials

- 11.6.1 The type and variety of designs – the form of new building, materials used, the amount and type of decoration and functional elements such as flues, gutters, flashings, the position and type of doors and windows – is key to the creation and retention of local identity in an area.
- 11.6.2 Historically, the design of individual buildings was influenced by local crafts, traditions and materials, leading to a degree of visual harmony in older settlements. Exceptions were sometimes made for more important buildings (such as town halls and places of worship), with the use of more elaborate designs and less common building materials brought in from greater distances. However, with volume-building providing economies of scale, the close association of local builders with suppliers of local materials has been lost. This has produced “placeless” buildings and estates which have no connection to the local area and use the same, repeated designs over large sites, resulting in areas which provide little visual interest or real sense of place and fail to integrate well into the local landscape. This is greatly at odds with the subtle, localised, historic evolution of designs and use of materials over time.
- 11.6.3 Government guidance recognises that “the individual elements of which buildings of any kind are composed have a key role in determining their quality”<sup>24</sup>. The detailed design of buildings also needs to take into account the need to create a sense of safety and security<sup>25</sup>. Buildings fronting onto the street should have their principal entrance onto the street, blank facades should be avoided.

<sup>24</sup> Pages 73 - 79, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR gives further guidance.

<sup>25</sup> Page 54, By Design – Better Places To Live – A Companion Guide to PPG3, 2001, DTLR.

- 11.6.4 The District Council will, in accordance with Government guidance, seek to ensure that all new development responds to its local context, creates or reinforces local distinctiveness and is visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping. Original and innovative designs that reinforce the sense of place will be encouraged. The design of extensions should be visually subsidiary to the original building and respect the shape and symmetry of the entire building.
- 11.6.5 The “Dorset Thatching Report – Code of Practice” sets out guidelines for determining applications involving thatch<sup>26</sup>. In addition, some of the guidance in “Thatched Buildings – new properties and extensions – The Dorset Model” regarding details to meet building regulations are a consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission and Listed Building consent<sup>27</sup>.
- 11.6.6 The preparation of a Village Design Statement (VDS) is a community led exercise undertaken to provide a detailed analysis of the intrinsic qualities of the built environment. The exercise focuses on a particular village or locality and the aim is to highlight those qualities which local people particularly value and to establish the local identity or ‘sense of place’ of the settlement in terms of the landscape setting, street layout, plot pattern and the scale, design and construction of local buildings. The VDS can help guide future development within or close to the village, with the aim of maintaining local identity. The statement can also help inform development control decisions, particularly in relation to detailed design issues. The District Council will, therefore, encourage and support local communities in the preparation of Village Design Statements.

### **POLICY DA7 DETAILED DESIGN AND MATERIALS**

New development will be expected to display a high quality of design that complements and respects the distinctive character of the locality. Original and innovative designs that reinforce the sense of place will be encouraged. All proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i) that the materials to be used will be sympathetic to the natural and built surroundings;
- ii) that the general design will be in harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole; and
- iii) that any alterations to or extensions of buildings will be designed and detailed to be sympathetic to the scale and character of the building and should be well related to, and not overpower, the building.

### **Lighting Schemes**

- 11.6.7 Poorly designed lights can lead to light pollution. As well as being energy inefficient, this is also detrimental to the landscape quality and character of the rural parts of West Dorset, where the dark night skies emphasise the remote and unspoilt nature of the countryside, and within Conservation Areas where the visual quality of the environment is of especial importance. The glare from lighting schemes can also have an adverse effect on local residents, vehicle users, cyclists and pedestrians.

<sup>26</sup> Prepared by Dorset County Council and the District Councils; approved by West Dorset District Council on 20/2/97 to be used as a guide when dealing with thatched buildings in West Dorset.

<sup>27</sup> Guidelines prepared by the Dorset Local Authorities in conjunction with Dorset Fire and Rescue Service and the Dorset Master Builders Association.

- 11.6.8 The impact of badly designed or inappropriate lighting schemes is recognised in Government guidance<sup>28</sup>, and detailed advice on best practice has been published.<sup>29</sup> Not all lighting proposals require consent<sup>30</sup>, but the District Council considers that potential light pollution should be addressed at the planning application stage, when details of any external lighting schemes should be submitted. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate to the District Council that the scheme proposed is the minimum needed for security and working purposes and that it minimises potential light pollution from glare and spillage. Conditions may be applied.

### POLICY DA8 LIGHTING SCHEMES

Applications for development which include a lighting scheme will only be permitted provided:

- i) the intensity of illumination is no more than the minimum required to undertake the task, in terms of security, safety or visual considerations;
- ii) the potential pollution from glare or spillage of light is minimised;
- iii) the lighting would not have a detrimental impact on the amenity and safety of local residents, vehicle users, cyclists, pedestrians; and
- iv) the benefits of the lighting scheme can be shown to outweigh any adverse effects on the character of the unlit countryside.

### Shop Fronts and Advertisements

- 11.6.9 Shop fronts and advertisements communicate information to passers-by, and are essential to many commercial activities. They take many forms, including: fascia signs and projecting / hanging signs on shops; pole signs at petrol filling stations; sign boards at factories; poster hoardings; and advance signs along the highway<sup>31</sup>. Virtually all outdoor advertisements are within the scope of the control regime specified by the Secretary of State in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992. The regime enables local planning authorities to control advertisements in the interests of amenity and public safety. Some types of advertisement are exempted from detailed control; other types of advertisement qualify for what is called “deemed consent”, provided they conform to stated conditions and limitations for each category and other types of advertisements will always require the local planning authority’s consent. An official explanatory booklet entitled “Outdoor Advertisements and Signs – A Guide for Advertisers” provides further detailed information<sup>32</sup>.
- 11.6.10 Advertisements affect the appearance of the building, structure or place where they are displayed, and the Government advises that they should “contribute positively to the appearance of an attractive and cared-for environment in cities, towns and the countryside.” The quality of the environment can be adversely affected by advertisements that are visually intrusive by their design, colour, materials and/or degree of illumination. Their impacts can be particularly noticeable in historic towns or villages, most of which are designated Conservation Areas, and in the countryside. Advertisements can also lead to road safety problems by distracting road users, or reducing highway visibility.

<sup>28</sup> Appendix A, PPS23: Planning and Pollution Control, 2004, ODPM and para. C68, PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment, 1994, DETR

<sup>29</sup> Lighting in the Countryside: Towards Good Practice, 1997, DETR

<sup>30</sup> Examples of installations which would normally require consent include: external lighting installations which materially alter the external appearance of a building; lighting installations on Listed Buildings which materially affect their character; illumination of outdoor advertisements; and most forms of lighting on columns, for example, for the lighting of outdoor sports venues, or for security purposes.

<sup>31</sup> In the context of this policy “advertisement” means those items referred to in the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992.

<sup>32</sup> Para2, PPG19: Outdoor Advertisement Control, 1992, DoE

11.6.11 Decisions controlling advertisements will be made with regard to amenity and public safety. Where Listed Buildings predominate there will be restraint, and where signs are needed to promote economic activity the design should be in keeping with the character of the building. In all cases the Council will encourage high quality design and materials in shop front development. In some cases it may be desirable and more appropriate to replace certain shop fronts, particularly if they are poor modern shopfronts which lack detailing and correct proportioning and detract from the character of the building and the area. The reinstatement of a traditional shop front or traditional features such as stall risers and recessed doorways may be appropriate in such circumstances. The Council will not discourage good quality contemporary shop fronts, however standardised “off the shelf” designs will often not be acceptable if for example they lack detail, are of inappropriate materials or detract from the character of the building or area. Further guidance on shopfronts can be found in the Council’s “Shop fronts and Advertisements Design Guide”, which was adopted as supplementary planning guidance in July 2004.

### **POLICY DA9 SHOP FRONTS**

Proposals for new or replacement shop fronts, including associated features such as shutters, grilles or advertisements, will be permitted provided that;

- i) they are compatible with and respect the character, appearance and scale of the building, and;
- ii) they are compatible with and respect the building’s surroundings in terms of size, proportions, form, design, materials and use of colour; and
- iii) security shutters are designed as open grilles or are placed behind the window; and
- iv) any advertisement associated with the shop front does not visually dominate the individual building or street scene.

The Council will encourage high quality design and materials in shop front development.