



Purbeck Design Guidance
Managing and using traditional
building details in Purbeck



Foreword

Achieving high quality design is a key planning objective. The Council has produced this document to support the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document. It provides an overview of traditional building details typical around the District, which together play an important role in providing a distinctive local character. It sets down expectations the Council will have when considering planning applications in which traditional detailing is used, and should also be useful in those cases where planning permissions or consents are not required. The four key aims of this guide are:

- to provide a source of ideas by highlighting the importance of building details;
- to provide guidance where altering traditional buildings;
- to assist in the assessment of planning proposals; and,
- to help deliver a more attractive and sustainable environment in Purbeck.

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About this design guidance

1. This section explains the purpose of this design guidance, how it is structured, who should use it and how to use it.

What is design guidance?

2. Design guidance provides an overview of design principles and ‘good’ practice, and sets down the expectations the Council has when considering planning applications.

This guidance aims to:

- be a source of detailed guidance that expands upon topics in the District Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document;
- be a practical source of ideas and suggestions; and
- help you think through issues.

This guidance seeks to:

- raise the standard of design in all types of development;
- raise the standard of applications for planning permissions and consents;
- highlight the importance of traditional details;
- assist planning officers in assessment of proposals; and
- facilitate delivery of an attractive and sustainable environment.

About this design guidance

3. This design guidance is organised into sections that deal with individual building details, allowing quick reference to those aspects of particular interest using the contents list. Details always have a context however – they do not exist in isolation. You may find it useful therefore to read a number of sections, or to complement your reading where applicable by looking at the District’s conservation area and townscape character appraisals. These offer a broader consideration of the role details play in providing local character and distinctiveness.
4. This document is complemented by design guidance published by the Council entitled, *Managing and using traditional building materials in Purbeck*.

Who should use this design guidance?

5. This design guidance will be particularly useful for people who own or who wish to alter a traditional building, including those that are listed. It will also be useful where designing in a traditional style, or in the context of traditional development (e.g. within conservation

areas or parts of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), whether or not this requires formal consent (e.g. planning permission). This includes:

- Homeowners
 - Developers
 - Farmers
 - Local businesses and shop owners
 - Agents acting on behalf of any of the above
6. The Council is committed to improving the design of all forms of development, to provide better homes, business premises and public spaces, and to enhance the overall quality of the District's built environment. High quality, well designed development benefits the wider community and has a positive influence on the way in which the District is viewed as a place to live, work and visit. In providing this guide, the Council aims to help encourage high quality sustainable development across the District.
7. The Council is able to provide further assistance to prospective applicants for planning permissions and consents through the process of pre-application discussion. Meeting request forms and details of charges are available at www.dorsetforyou.com.

Why are details important?

8. The careful management of building details and their use in building design can both add and conserve visual interest and local distinctiveness. Use of architectural detailing within your development can help to produce buildings, townscapes and places which are more engaging, and which have higher amenity value than might otherwise be the case.
9. Use of traditional details within a development is no substitute for proper architectural design. You should never apply details randomly within a design, or without thought as to how they relate to one another. You should also take extra care where using prefabricated detailing kits, as quality varies and results can appear mediocre.
10. As details form an important basis of architectural 'style', it is important that you/your architect have an understanding of rules governing the style to which particular details belong, before design work is commenced. This will include the need to consider factors such as building scale, form, height, layout and materials – the context within which details are used. It is perfectly acceptable for you to design using historic styles where the context permits, provided they are used correctly.
11. With great care, traditional details can be used in, and form a basis for 'contemporary' (stylistically modern) interpretations of traditional styles. Such reinvention can help to create a sense of vitality and interest, and has a long history in past movements such as Art Deco and Arts and Crafts design. This is a creative exercise which goes beyond simple addition of traditional details to modern forms, or use of modern materials and products in traditional forms. Contemporary design is best handled by a skilled architect.
12. Details play a crucial role in providing character and interest to listed buildings, buildings in conservation areas and building within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The historic authenticity and architectural integrity of such buildings depends upon their proper conservation. You should always focus efforts upon maintenance of existing buildings, and use them as a source of inspiration for the new design.



The difference made by details; contrasting views of suburban development in Swanage. Left: richly detailed and visual interesting Edwardian housing built using local materials. Right: utilitarian 1980s housing which lacks visual interest or association with the local context.

Doors and gates

13. Doors and gates play a crucial role in informing the architectural and visual character of a building. As examples of historic joinery and craftsmanship, doors, their fixings and door furniture can be of considerable interest in their own right. Traditional types of door remain popular, and where newly installed or forming part of a new development it is important that you take care in selecting an appropriate design.

Plank doors

14. Plank doors are characteristic of much of the District's traditional housing and many of its estate cottages where they are used both internally and externally. Plank doors are still commonly used for outbuildings and garden gates. Doors of this type were traditionally constructed from 3-5 broad planks, though modern versions usually employ a greater number of narrower strips. These planks were simply butted or jointed, with ornamentation, if any, often restricted to a flush bead. Planks were held together by either within a frame, or by timbers applied to the rear known as ledges (horizontal) and braces (placed diagonally between ledges).



Doors. Top left: pitching door in a domestic coach house with stable. Top centre and right: front doors. (Examples from Kingston and Corfe Castle). Bottom left: typical six panel door in Wareham. Bottom right: an unusual six panel design in Swanage (note glazed fanlight above).



Panelled doors

15. Panelled doors are generally associated with more formal architectural styles than plank doors. They were common from the eighteenth century onwards, and become typical of most standard suburban and urban housing types of the nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries. It is not unusual to find that houses with panelled front doors may have simple plank doors on lesser elevations and ancillary buildings. Many variations of the panelled door exist, though two basic forms account for the majority: six panelled doors, commonly a feature of eighteenth and early nineteenth century buildings; and four panelled doors, common during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In all cases, paint was the usual finish.



A mass produced 'Georgian' style door. This model with its 'slipped fanlight' (semi circular window) and brass door furniture is very commonly seen in modern suburban housing, but doors of this design were not produced in the past. Fanlights were traditionally placed above the door, usually inside the pediment (the triangular space) of a classical door case, but never within the door itself. Where such doors are installed in buildings designed or built in Georgian style the result is particularly poor.

Glazing in domestic doors

16. The function of glazing at the entrance was usually to help light a dark hallway. In the case of plank doors, small rectangular glazing panels are often inset within the upper central section, and held in a simple rebate with putty or bead. Fanlights (semi circular glazed panels set *above* the door) and transom lights (rectangular glazed panels set *above* the door) were used in conjunction with solid doors, with or without an outer door case or surround. Where neither fanlight nor transom light was available, the two upper panels of a six panel door might occasionally be glazed. Later, and once larger sheets of glass became readily available, using glazing in place of panels in doors became common. This glazing was most decorative during the Edwardian period, where larger houses were often provided with half glazed doors with glazed surrounds, in which use of stained glass was popular. Examples may be found in Swanage.
17. 'Bull's eyes' – small panels carrying a bulbous circular undulation on their face – were historically a cheap by-product of window glass manufacture. Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, this involved spinning sheets of glass on a rod (so called 'crown glass'). The 'bull's eye' was the central panel. Historic examples can sometimes be randomly found in the less important parts of cottages around the District where they add interest, though never usually in formal use at the front. The use of bull's eye glazing is, however, often

seen within modern cottage style plank doors where they are used to give an 'olde worlde' character. It is best to avoid this where possible, particularly on historic buildings.

Changing doors into windows

18. The need to replace a door with a window sometimes arises during conversion projects. Simply inserting a window and blocking below can have an adverse impact upon character. A better approach is to select a suitable semi-glazed door design and to fix this as a facing within the opening. Semi-glazed doors were often traditionally used in historic factory buildings, and can work well taken as a model for the conversion of agricultural and other functional buildings. The design typically employs an outer frame with plank bottom panel and multi-glazed top panel.



Door changed to window. Whilst this loading door is no longer in any active use, its identity as a door has been retained whilst its function has changed to that of a window. This approach may not be appropriate in every case, but the principle is well illustrated in this photo.

Door fixings and furniture

19. The hinges, nails, locks and other door furniture (including knobs and letter plates) on historic doors can be of considerable interest. These are often likely to have been produced by local craftsmen, and typically lack the regular appearance of machine made products. Old locks and letter plates in particular are sometimes unsuited to modern use, either due to their size or their simplicity. Rather than replacing them however, newer versions can be added alongside. Blacksmith made hinges and nails are still available from specialist suppliers, though you should conserve historic fixings and furniture wherever possible.

Maintenance and upgrading of historic doors

20. If it becomes necessary to upgrade the fire resistance of doors you can often do this without need to change the door itself by adding 'intumescent' (fire proof) paint, and a seal around the edge. Panels can also be upgraded where necessary through use of fire resistant inserts.
21. If you own a listed building, you will need to apply to the Council for listed building consent to remove or replace doors. As doors often form an important part of the historic fabric of a listed building, your objective should always be to repair and retain historic

examples, even where you consider them to be 'redundant'. Where you no longer wish to use a doorway or for a doorway to be used, doors can be simply locked or carefully fixed shut.

Gates

22. During the past, the enclosure of private property within the District's towns and villages was generally the norm, and accesses were usually fitted with gates. In a domestic context, the posts on which the gates were hung were usually designed to provide emphasis to the opening and a tidy edge to the boundary (e.g. gate piers within a masonry wall). Where designing within the context of a traditional street or historic property, the use of gates helps to retain and provide character and enclosure where accesses are inserted. The distinction this provides between public and private space also helps to make places easier to understand.
23. Gates traditionally vary according to the nature of the access closed and the location. Barred timber gates and wrought iron or steel 'estate' gates (used in conjunction with estate railings) are generally common within rural areas and can be seen all round the District. Pedestrian gates of the same format may be installed separately or used in conjunction with both types. Within an urban context vehicular accesses set within high boundary walls or building facades were traditionally provided with either painted solid timber gates or more ornamental wrought ironwork. Both timber and 'wrought iron' gates have been popularly used for driveways since this time, and some designs, including barred timber gates with high curved braces at the side, may consequently have a strong 'suburban' character not well suited to rural use.



Gates. Left: steel estate/park gate. Right: traditional flat topped five bar timber field gate.

Box 1: Doors and gates

1. Avoid new doors containing slipped fanlights or bull's eye glazing.
2. Avoid use of plastic doors.
3. Finish metalwork and domestic doors with paint.
4. Match door type to architectural style or character.
5. Retain and repair historic doors and door fixings and furniture wherever possible.
6. Use gates to close vehicular and pedestrian accesses.
7. Use simple flat topped barred and braced field or estate gates.

Porches, canopies and surrounds

24. Porches, canopies and surrounds traditionally perform one or more of the following basic functions:

- sheltering the entrance from weather or draughts;
- provision of an entrance lobby, particularly where there is no internal hallway; and
- providing architectural decoration and emphasis to the building entrance.

Five main types typically found in traditional domestic development around the District are listed below.

Enclosed masonry or timber porch with entrance to the front.

25. An open front is common, though masonry models may be closed by a door.



Enclosed solid wall porches. (Morden, Wareham, Worth).

Enclosed semi-glazed timber porch with entrance to the front.

26. Semi-glazed timber porches are features of Edwardian development in Swanage where they often incorporate stained glass. These porches can reach relatively large sizes, at which point they may sometimes be better described as verandahs or conservatories.



Edwardian semi-glazed timber porches in Swanage.



Fully enclosed solid walled porch with pent (lean-to) roof and door to the side, or less frequently a door to the front.

27. This type of porch tends to be the least attractive and most bulky amongst traditional types. Found on the front, side or back of a property, these are commonly components of larger extensions. Those with a side entrance often occur where first floor sill heights are too low to accommodate a full size at the front whilst maintaining an adequate roof pitch. In some cases a side entrance may also have helped to deflect draughts.



Fully enclosed lean to porches in Langton Matravers.

Canopy with pitched or pent roof carried on brackets or posts with sides open.

28. This type of porch is often a more decorative than practical feature, though some shelter is provided to the access. Canopies of this type often see stylistic use on nineteenth, and early twentieth century estate cottages and suburban houses. Timber is commonly used, though simple canopies are also sometimes supported on metal brackets.



Canopies on nineteenth century houses (Lytchett Minster, Swanage, Wareham). Examples far left and right feature on estate buildings, each of which has a solid front door with a transom light (rectangular glazed panel) above.

Neo-classical door surround with canopy

29. In these formal designs the canopy is either formed by a flat roof (below right), or pediment above the door (below left), each supported on columns or pilasters (flattened columns). A glazed or blanked fanlight (semi-circular window) or transom light (rectangular window) is often positioned above the door. The extent of projection from the wall face varies, and in some cases this is sufficient to form a lobby. Use is usually associated with formal Georgian architectural style.



Georgian doorcases in Wareham. The example above left has a blanked fanlight of which there are several examples in Wareham, though these are otherwise frequently often glazed. The example above left has a transom light

30. Some late nineteenth and early twentieth century house types incorporate internal lobbies which remove the need for a porch. In these cases, a transom light (rectangular window) is often installed over the front door to illuminate the hallway.

Box 2: Porches, canopies and surrounds

1. Retain and repair historic porches, canopies and surrounds wherever possible.
2. Match the design of porches, canopies and surrounds to the architectural style and character of the building.

Windows

31. Windows play a crucial role in informing the architectural and visual character of a building. As examples of historic joinery and craftsmanship, windows, their frames, glazing and furniture can be of considerable interest in their own right. Traditional window designs remain popular, and where newly installed or forming part of a new development you should take care in selection. Three main window types can be found used in traditional buildings around the District:
- vertical sliding sash (with pulley and weights);
 - horizontal sliding sash (without pulley or weights) – otherwise known as ‘Yorkshire sash’; and
 - casement (side hung).

The above are distinguished from ‘bays’, ‘bows’, ‘oriel’ and ‘dormers’ which are all architectural details containing one or other of the above window types.

Generally

32. The type of window used in traditional development often corresponds to the proportion of the window opening in question. Casements and horizontally sliding sashes generally suit squarer, squatter openings, and vertically sliding sash windows taller rectangular openings, though many variations are found. Achieving proper proportion is a particular challenge where designing in traditional style. Using minimum sill heights and increasing ceiling heights can help in providing vertical emphasis where designing vertically sliding sashes or bay windows. Where infilling traditional development in similar style take your cue from the neighbouring buildings.
33. Cottages around the District often have windows of inconsistent dimension between ground and first floor levels, the latter typically smaller. In these cases it is not unusual to find different types of window used at ground floor and first floor levels. Formal building designs usually show a greater degree of consistency in terms of both sizing and alignment of window openings, though differences between floors may still arise due to intentional variation of floor to ceiling heights relative to the architectural style applied.

Vertical sliding sash windows

34. The heyday of the vertical sliding sash in Purbeck was the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during which time it was commonly used in houses of all classes. Presence in eighteenth century and earlier buildings is usually associated with higher status or later refurbishment. A fundamental characteristic of this type of window is that it opens along a single plane. Sash windows are usually, though not exclusively, taller than they are wide, and thus commonly help to provide ‘vertical emphasis’ within an elevation.
35. Early sash windows were fitted flush in the masonry, with boxes containing the pulley weights exposed. Boxes were typically detailed with applied mouldings. Panes were small and set within glazing bars which were relatively thick in the earliest models, and typically of ‘ovolo’ pattern. Early windows may contain hand made crown glass which may be identified by ripples in the surface. Multi-paned windows lacked ‘horns’ (the

projecting nibs either side of the centre or 'meeting' rail). Good examples can be seen in Wareham and Swanage.

36. Sash windows typical of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century were set back from the face of the opening providing what is known as a 'reveal'. The window mechanism was set into the walls, increasing the glazed area. Panes remained small, though glazing bars become increasingly narrow. Examples may be seen across the District.



Left: Flush fit multi-paned sash window with exposed box in Wareham. Right: sash window with recessed box and reveal in Wareham. Centre: cross section through a sash window.

37. The ability to cheaply manufacture larger sheets of glass from the mid nineteenth century onwards resulted in the phasing out of glazing bars. Increased weight required strengthening of the frames through addition of 'horns' to the stiles of the upper sash either side of the central meeting rail. Use of glazing bars during the Edwardian period was typically for decorative effect, with application often restricted to the upper sash. Many good examples survive in Swanage and have been successfully copied in new development.



Top hung plastic window which crudely imitates a traditional sash window. Detailing, opening mechanism, materials and fitting are poor. Genuine sliding sash windows with this configuration were typically 'single hung' i.e. the top panel was fixed. Note the horns, not traditionally employed on multi-paned windows, the thick meeting rail and chunky glazing bars.

Horizontal sliding sash ('Yorkshire sash')

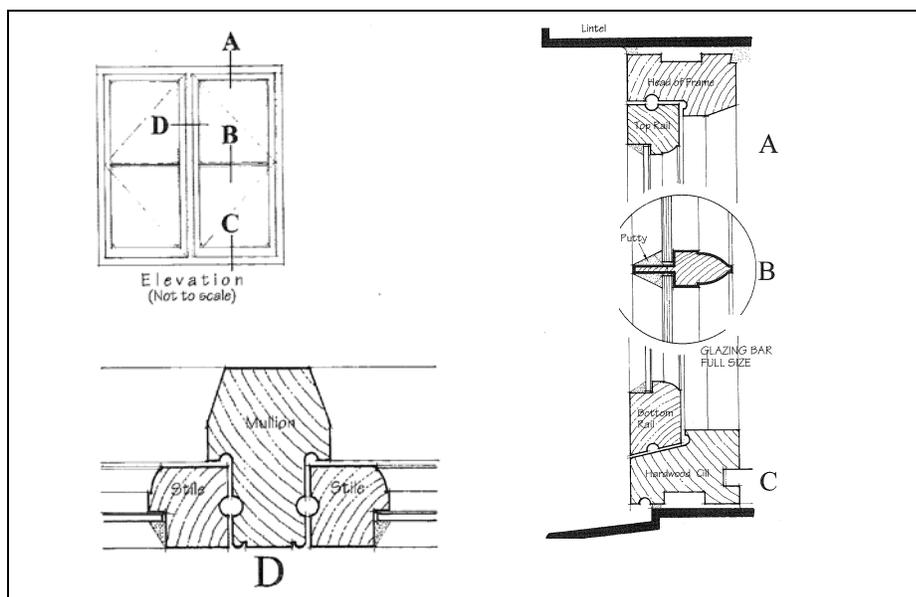
38. Horizontal sliding sash windows are found sporadically in eighteenth and early nineteenth century cottages across the District. These are typically fitted flush within the façade, with panes subdivided by glazing bars. In traditional cottage development, horizontal sliding sashes are often found at first floor level used in combination with ground floor casements. Horizontally sliding sashes rarely reach large size.



Yorkshire sash, and casement window.

Casement

39. The hinged side hung casement window is the earliest, most common and non-period specific form of window used across the District. It is particularly characteristic of traditional cottages, and often fitted in dormers of properties carrying sliding sashes on the façade. Traditional casement windows have a symmetrical (or 'balanced') construction. This means that both opening and fixed elements are of uniform appearance and proportion when closed. Fitting within openings may be either flush or slightly set back (i.e. within a 'reveal') from the building face. Traditional casements have a flat face with joinery components sitting flush, quite unlike so called 'storm proof' casements more typical in modern housing. Whilst the majority of casement windows were made of timber, metals such as cast iron and steel were also sometimes used.



Flush fit traditional casement window joinery details (Cotswold DC).

Oriel, bay and bow

40. Curved bow windows are a feature of early shop fronts seen around Wareham. Stylistic use in some arts and crafts and inter war properties is also common. The bay window became a popular domestic feature during the second half of the nineteenth century. In its most common Victorian and Edwardian use these are typically robust polygonal structures with heavy 'mullions' (structural uprights), sill and cornice. Bay windows are frequent in Swanage where they are sometimes stacked as many as four storeys high. Buildings featuring bay windows typically also incorporated a transom light (small rectangular window) above the front door, allowing the height of the bay to be stretched without causing imbalance to the composition of the frontage. A cornice was usually incorporated above the window, and various roof forms were employed. Success in modern use of the bay window requires adequate vertical emphasis and attention to detail, both of which are frequently lacking. The oriel window is differentiated from the bay through its attachment to the building above ground floor level, and is a common feature of Edwardian commercial development in Swanage.



Left: late nineteenth century two storey bay, the principal feature on the frontage of a house in Herston. Centre: two storey inter-war bay in Herston. Top right: Edwardian oriel in Swanage. Bottom right: Early nineteenth century bay/bow in Wareham.

Glazing

41. A usual aspect of the architectural character of traditional buildings is use of single glazing. In some cases, this will form an important part of the historic fabric of the building. Handmade window glass (e.g. crown glass or early cylinder glass), often holds great visual quality due to lively reflections caused by ripples and imperfections in the surface. Examples exist in nineteenth century and earlier buildings around the District.

42. Whilst replacement of single glazed windows with double glazing can improve energy performance, this may be at the cost of historic architectural character and interest, given differing reflective qualities, joinery sections and features such as 'stick-on' glazing bars. For these reasons double glazing is not appropriate for use in the historic parts of listed domestic buildings. The performance of single glazed windows can be greatly improved by draught stripping, slimline secondary glazing, and simple measures such as use of curtains and blinds. English Heritage has produced useful guidance in its series, *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings* (available online).
43. Traditional joinery details are difficult to execute well where using conventional double glazing, due to the increase in glazing bar sections and frame thicknesses required. This is a particular problem where specifying multi-pane windows. In unlisted buildings, and extensions to listed buildings you should consider use of slimline double glazed units with thicknesses as low as 10mm, as these allow use of more traditional joinery details.
44. Where you are specifying horizontally sliding sash windows, observe convention in regard to the attachment or omission of 'horns'. Multi-pane 'Georgian' sashes should not be fitted with horns. Horns are a historically and technically appropriate feature of clear or substantially clear glazed sash windows.

Maintenance and upgrading of historic windows

45. Wet rot can sometimes affect timber windows. This only occurs in damp timber, and will not spread to dry parts of the window. Modern timber windows made with force grown softwood are particularly susceptible to rot, whereas hardwoods and the slow grown timber from which historic windows were made are more resilient. In most cases, rot will arise due to cracked paint allowing water to enter, highlighting the importance of regular maintenance. Where rot is localised, and the rest of the timber sound, then a window can be repaired by replacing the affected element, splicing in new sections of timber, or by filling. You should take care where scraping off old finishes as part of a repair or maintenance, as historic paints commonly contained lead.
46. If you own a listed building, you need to apply to the Council for listed building consent to alter or replace windows. As windows often form an important part of the historic fabric of a listed building your objective should always be to repair and retain historic examples. Where consent is granted for replacement of an historic window beyond repair, this will normally be on the basis of replicating the window removed, possibly reusing the old glass and fastenings. Where unsympathetic windows have previously been installed, take the opportunity to enhance your building by using more appropriate replacements.

Box 3: Windows

1. Take care to adopt proper proportions where designing new windows.
2. Avoid use of 'bull's eye' glazing.
3. Finish domestic window joinery with paint.
4. Avoid use of plastic windows.
5. Retain and repair historic windows. Replicate where necessary.
6. Consider secondary glazing and draught stripping of single glazed windows.

Lintels, sills and arches

47. All openings formed within and beneath a wall require some form of structural support to prevent collapse. This is usually provided by a lintel or arch set across the top, which in the case of window openings, is sometimes complemented by a sill at the bottom. These details can play an important role within traditional architecture, emphasising the form of openings and adding visual interest and ornamentation. Whilst modern construction typically uses concrete or 'hidden' steel supports, there remains scope to add visual interest to building designs by detailing arches, lintel and sill within the facing masonry.

Lintels

48. The simplest lintels employed within traditional construction are timber beams. Around the District these are mainly seen in cob (earth) buildings and are also common features of those constructed from stone. Timber lintels were often concealed by protective render or limewash coatings as part of the external wall decoration, though in some cases have been exposed where these coatings have been removed.
49. Solid stone lintels came into widespread use during the mid to late nineteenth century, remaining popular up until the early twentieth century. They form a common component of standardised (or 'pattern book') building designs typical of the period. Stone lintels often carry a chamfered edge, and occasionally some further decoration. Where used over window openings, solid stone lintels are usually mirrored by similarly sized window sills. Lintels of this type were used in buildings constructed from both brick and stone, and can be seen around Swanage, Wareham and most other parts of the District containing late Victorian and Edwardian development.



Arches and lintels. Top left: a finely jointed gauged brick 'flat' arch (Wareham). Top right: timber lintel (Corfe Castle). Bottom left: stone arch – more common in brick (Corfe Castle). Bottom right: stone lintel with chamfered edge (Wareham).

Arches

50. Arches formed from stone slips or 'segments' are sometimes seen in stone cottages, however within Purbeck arches are more commonly a feature of brick buildings. Here

they may be either curved or 'flat', amongst which the best quality are made using finely jointed 'gauged' brick. The latter is typical in formal designs of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, examples of which are readily seen in Wareham and Bere Regis. The economical 'soldier arch' which is simply formed by a row of bricks, is a common feature of late twentieth century design which aspires to be traditional. These provide little visual interest and can appear crude. Brick arches are normally an important feature of flint walled properties where the brick is carried down the side of the opening to form a regular edge.

Sills

51. Projecting window sills are frequently absent from traditional cottage designs, where window frames are positioned flush within the wall. In some instances, a timber sill integral to the window frame exists, though these are usually modern additions. Where window sills are present in traditional building designs, these are often simply formed from thin pieces of projecting flat stone or timber, and less commonly a line of tiles (known as 'creasing'). Heavy stone sills with 'drips' (a groove along the underside to assist in the shedding of rainwater) only become common during the nineteenth century. Bull nosed brick sills are sometimes a feature of window openings in agricultural buildings, and may occur in cottages whose openings are defined by brick surrounds (e.g. in buildings constructed from flint).

Generally

52. Within rendered or painted frontages, sills and lintels were not traditionally left untreated. In the case of buildings covered with smooth render (or 'stucco'), decorative sill and lintel details were sometimes built up in plaster, or more commonly scored into the face of the render.

Box 4: Lintels, sills and arches

1. Provide arch and lintel details over window, door and other openings.
2. Consider the nature of structural support and lintel type early in the design process.

Dormers

53. Dormer windows are frequent features of traditional building design around the District. The design of dormers themselves shows some variation influenced by four main factors:
- the period of construction;
 - the character of roof form and roofing materials;
 - the historic practice of adding a first floor to a single storey cottages which sometimes involved raising the roof; and
 - the role dormers play within particular architectural styles.

Historically, the principal role of dormers was to admit light to the interior, as opposed to extending attic headroom – a dual role that appears to have become popular from the nineteenth century onwards, and which produces marked differences in size and emphasis between buildings and styles. Where adding dormer windows to existing buildings, or incorporating them into the design of new buildings, you should take the above points into account.



Historic dormer windows with pent roof. Note the small size, though the pitch created is still relatively shallow. Modern windows of this type are often oversized creating a boxy appearance.

General characteristics

54. The roofs of the dormers are most commonly either pitched or hipped. Pent roofs are infrequent features given risk of inadequate pitch, and within traditional development normally only occur in association with stone roofs and thatched roofs. Flat roofs are generally associated with modern dormers, though are not entirely unknown in historic construction where they have lead covered roofs. Unusual exceptions to the general pattern are the bay window 'dormers' seen in Edwardian development around Swanage. These windows form the topmost component of stacks of bay windows carried up the front of certain buildings.
55. The 'cheeks' (or sides) of traditional dormers are normally covered in the same material as that on the roof. Some Edwardian designs seen around Swanage have glazed sides. The faces of dormers with pitched roofs may be similarly clad, built up in the same material as the building frontage, or simply rendered.



Above: dormer in an Edwardian villa – note use of decorative bargeboards (Swanage). Below left: stylised, and atypical use in a thatched roof in Briantspuddle. Below right: modest hipped dormers in Corfe.



'Full' dormers

56. A 'full' dormer window is one constructed fully within the roof slope. In traditional building design, these are usually placed in one of three possible positions:
- at the eaves aligned to the external wall face;
 - at the eaves aligned to the internal wall face; or
 - between the eaves and ridge supported off the purlins (horizontal roof timbers).
57. Within traditional development, full dormers are usually smaller than the windows within the main elevation. Dormers of similar size to the windows below are a feature of Edwardian development around Swanage, though here, as in all cases where dormers form part of the original architectural design, they always form a carefully considered element of the overall composition. Dormers here are typically either aligned with the windows directly beneath them, or regularly spaced to provide balance.
58. Dormers positioned fully within the roof of a thatched building are rarely original features given difficulty in construction and detailing, though do form a stylistic element of the

cottages built around Briantspuddle during the early twentieth century. Dormers are usually positioned on the wall head of thatched cottages, often where a habitable first floor has been added to a single storey building at some point in the past. The window is absorbed within the roof covering. Depending upon the thatching material, thatching technique and depth of thatch, appearance can vary significantly. Deep layers of supple wheat straw produce the appearance of windows entirely absorbed within the thatch. Where replaced by a thin coat of coarser water reed, dormers can appear harshly angular within the roof, though careful thatching can reduce this effect.

Half dormers

59. 'Half' dormers are dormers that straddle the eaves. Within traditional development around Purbeck this is a type that has often resulted from a slight raise in the roof of a single storied building roof to provide an additional half storey of accommodation. Unlike full dormers, it is not unusual for the windows within half dormers to be the same size as those beneath them.
60. A variation of the general pattern is the bay window 'half dormer' which is sometimes seen in Edwardian development around Swanage where it forms the topmost component of a stack of bay windows carried up the frontage.



Above: full dormer with pitched roof. Right: half dormers with pent roofs (bottom) and hipped roofs (top).

Box 5: Dormers

1. Take care to design using an appropriate position and scale.
2. Clad the 'cheeks' of dormer windows with the same material as the roof.

Eaves, gables and rainwater goods

61. Detailing of the eaves, gables and rainwater goods is often overlooked in modern design, however all play an important, sometimes subtle, but bold and flamboyant role in traditional design.

The eaves

62. Traditional construction within the District shows some variation. Many historic buildings were never built to carry gutters, and this is particularly the case for thatched and many agricultural structures. Instead buildings were constructed with a deep overhang at the eaves which helped to shed water away from the wall face.
63. Where roofs were constructed with rafters that rested directly on the top of the wall, an overhang could be achieved by one or a combination of methods which included projecting the roof covering itself, attaching sprockets near the feet of the rafters (short timbers which deflected the pitch), or corbelling along the top of the wall. The use of a stone tile 'easing' course (row of tiles along the eaves) on tiled roofs is a distinctive treatment seen around Wareham. This compensated for the small size of tiles which in themselves could not provide an adequate overhang.
64. Corbelling or attaching a cornice along the eaves provided support to the bottom course of the roof covering, whilst also tidying the junction of the wall with the roof. The opportunity was often taken to incorporate decoration, simple details commonly seen around the District include 'dog' or saw tooth' effects created in brick.



Parapet wall in Wareham. Note the cornice.

65. Eaves are absent from the frontages of some Georgian buildings seen around Wareham in particular. These buildings feature a low parapet walls formed by extending the faces of buildings upwards, hiding the junction between roof and wall and concealing the gutter in a valley. This created a simpler, tidier finish and more imposing appearance. It is usual for a cornice to be run along the base of the parapet.
66. The projection of rafters over the faces of the external walls creating a pronounced overhang at the eaves became a feature of several contrasting architectural styles during the nineteenth century. Within Purbeck, this is most familiar in Edwardian design, where

exposed rafter feet are commonly used in conjunction with moulded bargeboards on gables. In these cases rafter feet are sometimes themselves moulded, though more generally cropped with a narrow fascia applied. Timber 'sarking' (boards) usually line the underside of the overhang.

67. As rafters generally overhang the eaves in modern construction, ample opportunities are available to apply detailing. However, where designing in traditional style within rural areas it will often be best if you take the simplest approach, leaving the rafter feet free and unboxed, emphasising the overhang of the roof covering.



Left: moulded cornice detail. The outward kick of the roof slope has been achieved by 'spocketting' the eaves. Note the rise and fall gutters held on brackets. Right: dog tooth detailing with an 'ogee' profile box gutter.

Gutters

68. Gutters were traditionally manufactured from cast iron, and this remains the most appropriate material for use on historic buildings. With proper maintenance, cast iron can last for many years, and this is particularly important on listed buildings and where ornamental castings exist. A wide range of traditional profiles are still available. Unlike plastic, cast iron can hold a traditional painted finish, and is otherwise visually superior in terms of its texture. Cast aluminium can sometimes offer an effective alternative.
69. Simple half round gutter profiles are common and represent the norm amongst agricultural buildings and rural cottages. 'Ogee' sections are most likely to be found in association with late nineteenth and early twentieth century properties, where the more decorative profile plays a modest but important visual role in architectural design, sometimes embellished by ornamental hopper heads – a feature seen in Swanage.
70. Bracketed 'rise and fall' gutters are commonly found added to buildings originally designed to deflect water solely through projection of the roof covering at the eaves. These buildings lack fascia boards onto which gutters would otherwise be attached. You should consider using this type of gutter where undertaking the conversion of an agricultural or similar functional building.

Gables

71. The majority of traditional buildings found across the District are constructed with their ridges parallel to the road. For those buildings with a pitched, as opposed to hipped, roof

form, gables are commonly unadorned. Slate and tile coverings are often simply bedded in mortar atop a slate or tile 'under cloak' (slight projection providing support).

72. A number of decorative approaches to hiding and weathering the join between roof and wall on gables can be identified around the District, usually related to use of formal architectural styles. The use of a parapet formed by raising the gable wall above the line of the roof is a particular feature of Edwardian commercial streets in Swanage, and some Georgian frontages in Wareham. These sometimes also feature in terraces where the party walls are similarly treated. A moulded timber bargeboard, sometimes adorned with fretwork motifs, could also be applied to gables, many examples of which may be seen in late nineteenth and early twentieth century development in Swanage.
73. The decorative use of gables projected out from the building frontage became a common feature of architectural styles popular during the nineteenth century, and into the twentieth. In 'Edwardian' designs these typically carry a moulded bargeboard given emphasis by a pronounced overhang of the roof. The latter follows through to the eaves which are typically left open. The apex of the gable is often finished with a finial (ornamental pinnacle) whose tail may extend into, or through the bargeboard. Less flamboyant bargeboards were applied to inter-war suburban housing.



Left: bargeboard detail. Note the moulding on the upper edge. (Swanage). Right: bargeboard with finial extended through to a strut and collar. (Corfe Castle). Such bargeboards form part of an overall stylistic package and provide considerable visual interest.

Box 6: Eaves, gables and rainwater goods

1. Use cast iron where adding gutters to an historic building, or an extension to one.
2. Consider adding detail to the eaves and gables of new buildings.
3. Use timber, avoid plastic.
4. Avoid use of boxed eaves, particularly in rural areas.

Chimneys

74. Most domestic properties constructed before the 1960s were either designed to carry chimney stacks or had them added over the course of time – a process that could produce haphazard results. Within formal architectural styles of the past chimney stacks always played a fully integrated role in design of buildings, and were often given an elaborate appearance. Chimney stacks and pots were commonly used to provide or reinforce a sense of ‘vertical’ emphasis within designs, giving presence to a building whilst balancing and breaking up the mass and form of roofs. Though no longer an essential feature within house design, chimney stacks and pots play an essential role in providing visual character to historic buildings and conservation areas around the District.

Chimney stacks

75. In traditional design, chimney stacks generally adopt a size and form proportionate to the size of the building to which they are attached. This reflects both the number of rooms each stack would serve (i.e. one flue/pot for each room – normally two per floor) and importance of providing the building with a coherent appearance (e.g. buildings which have a strong vertical emphasis provided by windows might have this mirrored by a tall chimney stack). Where using chimney stacks within a new design, and particularly where using prefabricated ‘ornamental’ products, you should consider scale carefully and avoid use of undersized stacks and pots.
76. The minimum amount of detailing usually applied to chimney stacks in formally designed traditional buildings, is corbelling of the brickwork towards the top. This served both a visual and functional role, as the overhang assisted in shedding water, whilst the stack appeared more attractive than might otherwise be the case.
77. Positioning directly on, or in line with the ridge is most common for the principal chimney stacks on traditional buildings.
78. Chimney stacks should not generally be removed from listed buildings, as here they usually represent significant architectural features.
79. Where flues are redundant, it is sensible to maintain ventilation to help avoid dampness, and to maintain air circulation within the building. Removable clay inserts can be used to cap redundant pots and should be selected to harmonise with the colour and design of the latter. Where fireplaces have been sealed up, you should consider inserting a grille in the chimneybreast.

Materials

80. Brick was a preferred material for past use in chimney stack construction, given its resistance to high temperatures derived from firing during manufacture. This included areas otherwise typified by use of Purbeck stone for building, where deep red Swanage brick became popular for stacks. Chimney stacks of earlier origin used stone – the best amongst which utilised ashlar blocks, the most economic, rubble. Chimney stacks were sometimes rendered – usually where the frontage was similarly treated.

Chimney pots

81. Buff coloured roll top pots are by far the most common type found used within traditional development around the District. These were historically manufactured locally, including at Sandford Pottery just outside Wareham. Red and orange pots are also common, though more frequently associated with post war development, or modern replacements. Within areas of Edwardian development in Swanage, elaborate and visually interesting glazed pot designs such as the 'champion' sometimes occur as part of richly detailed building designs.



Left: common buff banded roll top pots in Wareham. Centre: nineteenth century 'champion' pots in Swanage atop a richly detailed chimney stack. Right: grouped flues in Gothic style at Kingston.

Caps and cowls

82. The use of stone slabs set on bricks, or propped diagonally over flues in place of chimney pots is an infrequent feature within settlements characterised by use of Purbeck stone. This sometimes appears to have been done as an informal means of dealing with down draughts, though in rare cases these elements formed part of the original building design.
83. Cowls are increasingly added to chimney pots as a result of the use of wood burning stoves. This is due to the chance of rain running down the stainless steel liners fitted as part of the installation. You should generally choose a simple cowl whose colour matches that of the pot.

Box 7: Chimneys

1. Consider incorporating chimney stacks into the design of new buildings and provide appropriate detailing.
2. Where adding a chimney stack or incorporating one into your design ensure that it and any pots used are properly scaled.
3. Maintain and retain chimney stacks and pots on historic buildings.
4. Choose cowls and inserts which match the colour, and complement the design of the pot to which they are attached.

Vents

84. The need to provide ventilation to buildings is nothing new, albeit the modern requirement for extraction reflects current practices of sealed construction. Modern vents, often made of plastic, are rarely attractive and do not harmonise well with the character or appearance of traditional or traditionally styled buildings. In these contexts, where a vent is required, you should consider adapting or copying a traditional solution.

Louvres

85. Louvres arranged in various formats were commonly used in the ventilation of buildings in the past, and are most frequently seen on traditional agricultural structures, and those built for public assembly (e.g. churches and schools). Examples in stone, timber, cast iron and clay can all be seen around the District. These provide suitable models for new work, and ample scope for sensitive integration of both commercial and domestic extract equipment where ducted internally.
86. As louvres may be used by bats and swallows to access nesting or roosting spaces you should take care in undertaking any works to them.

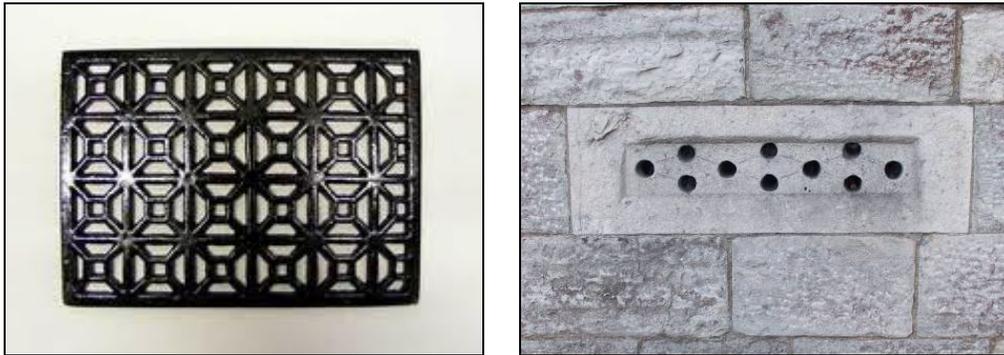


Top left: timber panel ventilating the loft of a farm building (Coombe). Top centre: louvre in stone (Dunshay). Top right: informal louvre (Swanage). Bottom left: ridge vent (East Lulworth). Bottom right: false dormer vents (Wareham).



Grilles and airbricks

87. Airbricks are commonly associated with roles such as the ventilation of suspended timber floors, outbuildings or privies. These can be very simple in design or highly ornamental depending upon their location and visibility. The most decorative treatment is provided by cast iron grilles. Traditional cast iron and clay air bricks are still manufactured and can be readily adapted to serve domestic extract fans. Where necessary these can be painted to match their backgrounds.



Left: a cast iron vent grille. Right: stone air brick. (Swanage)

Box 8: Vents

1. Avoid use of plastic – select vent type to match or complement materials within the wall.
2. Use traditional vent designs to serve modern domestic and commercial extract needs.
3. Consider visibility and detailing when positioning vents.

Rooflights

88. Primitive rooflights were formed by setting panes of glass within the roof covering. These sometimes survive in both agricultural and residential buildings around the District. In other cases glass tiles were used. Steel framed rooflights set flush within the roof slope, found more common use in domestic contexts from the nineteenth century onwards – albeit sparingly and discretely – and in an industrial context where used in rows (i.e. ‘strip lights’).
89. Where you are adding rooflights to historic buildings, or designing in a traditional style, take care to limit the number of rooflights used and position these on less important elevations.
90. Steel framed rooflights marketed as ‘conservation’ or ‘heritage’ rooflights, are available for modern use. These seek to imitate traditional designs, and vary in terms of their quality. The products most suited for use in historic buildings, are those designed to be flush fit, with a simple steel frame and functional glazing bars, lacking top vents or other modern additions.
91. Glass tiles offer a more subtle means of introducing light to the interior of a building than either rooflights or domes, and are available fully sealed for modern use alone or with ducts. These can play a useful role where additional lighting is essential, but use of rooflights would harm the character or appearance of the building (e.g. conversion projects or feature roofs).



Two traditional forms of roof lighting. Left: glazed tiles seen in Morden. Right: a steel rooflight seen in Wareham.

Box 9: Rooflights

1. Make sparing use of rooflights and place on less important elevations.
2. Choose rooflight designs that accurately replicate traditional models.
3. Fit rooflights flush with the roof slope.
4. Consider the use of glazed tiles where rooflights could appear visually obtrusive.

Conservatories and extensions

92. During the past, as now, buildings were extended by their owners. Extensions can often be a source of interest in their own right, reflecting the evolution of a building over time. Traditional practice in extending buildings offers a useful model for modern work.

Generally

93. The majority of traditional buildings within the District have a regular rectangular form, typically arranged long side front. A standard range of conventions exist in terms of their extension, showing variation with roof shape. In all cases it is very unusual to find extensions – not including porches – attached to the front elevation of a building.
94. In the vast majority of cases extensions of traditional buildings are visually ‘subservient’ to the host building in size and form. This approach is also the most appropriate where extending listed buildings.
95. If extending a traditional building that has already been extended in the past, you should give careful consideration to the ‘cumulative’ (or collective) impact that further extension might have upon the character of the original building. It is possible to overextend a traditional building, particularly if the original structure is characterised by, or of interest because of its small size.



Traditional forms of extension found in the District. Visually subservient and harmonious in form.

Lean-to extension

96. The lean-to is the most common form of extension found in association with cottages around the District. These are normally accommodated beneath a pent roof set either below the first floor windows or eaves, or run directly into that of the principal building.

Where run together, the resulting roof is known as ‘catslide’, which is an original design feature of some eighteenth century houses. Roofs of this type are visually striking, and can be spoiled by the addition of rooflights or dormers, or attachment of other features that would disrupt the simplicity and continuity of form and finish.

97. Lean-to extensions can be amongst the most visually ‘subservient’, and tend to emphasise the form of the host building, particularly where placed at gable ends. The best results are achieved where the pitch of the roof is no less than that of the host building. Shallow pitches can appear boxy and typically arise with increased extension depth. In these cases a lean-to roof form may not be the best choice.

Pitched or hipped roof extension

98. Extensions with pitched, hipped or half hipped roof forms are normally associated with buildings which themselves have roofs of similar type. These are typically attached either to a gable end in line with the host building, or positioned on the rear elevation at right angles. This gives the building either an elongated frontage, or ‘T’, ‘L’ or ‘U’ shaped form.

Conservatories

99. Domestic conservatories became popular during the second half of the nineteenth century. At this time they were mainly constructed in association with, or added to, large houses. As an evolution of the glass house (as opposed to green house), conservatories were primarily constructed with the display of exotic plants in mind. Large conservatories were sometimes constructed using cast and wrought iron, though timber was more generally employed. Whilst a few historic conservatories exist around the District, there is no distinct local pattern. Given the absence of conservatories from the majority of traditional domestic architecture, great care is required in adding them to historic buildings. Generally speaking, you should follow the same conventions as seen in relation to extensions generally in terms of position and form. Detailing should suit and be keeping with the property to which the conservatory is to be attached.



Historic conservatory at Leeson House. The form, positioning and detailing complements that of the property to which it is attached.

Box 10: Conservatories and extensions

1. Use a form which complements that of the host building.
2. Give consideration to the cumulative impact of extensions.
3. Extensions of listed buildings should be visually subservient.

Shop fronts

100. Shop fronts are a feature of all the District's towns, and occur in a number of its villages. In most cases these fall within conservation areas, emphasising the importance of conserving traditional details and promoting their use in new development. Even outside these areas adopting traditional design principles in production of shop front designs can produce more visually pleasing results than might otherwise be the case.

Traditional shop fronts

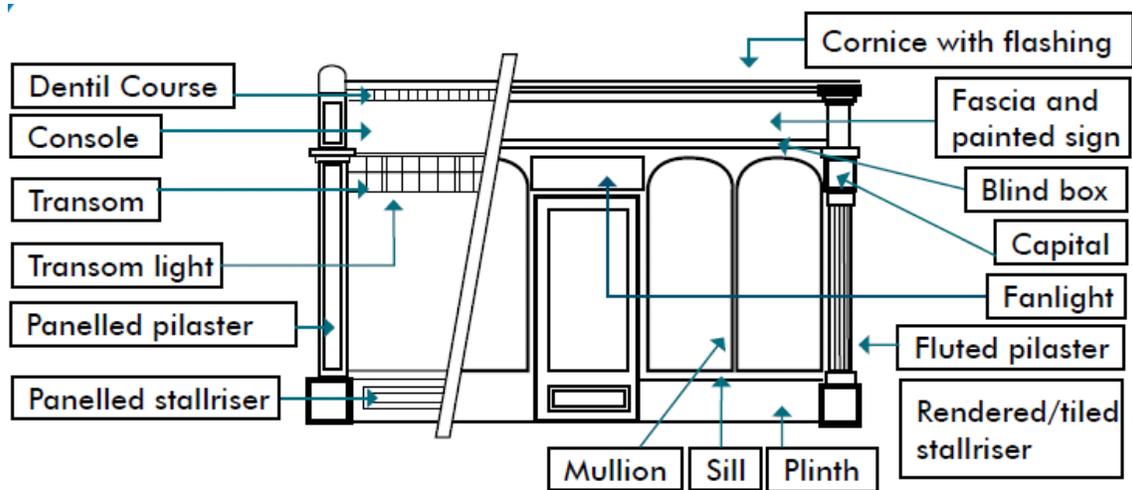
101. Recognisable 'shop fronts' began to appear during the late eighteenth century, though certain elements were used long before. Here the 'stall riser' (low plinth above which the display window is positioned) derives from the stands used to support stalls set up by traders within ground floor openings in buildings during the medieval period. With the eventual glazing of such openings, the stall lived on as an enclosed platform which carried the shop display.



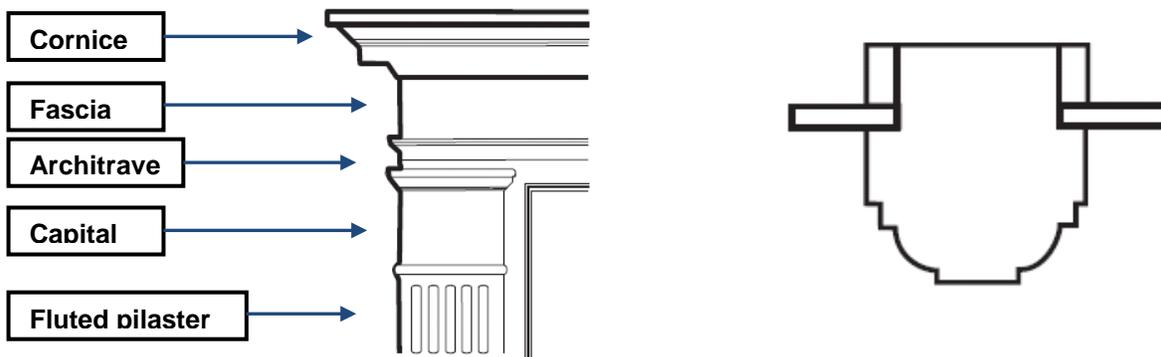
Left: late 18th-early 19th century multi-pane bow window shop front in Wareham. Right late 19th-early 20th century shop front with symmetrical arrangement of plate glass display windows, threshold (often provided with a mosaic) and retractable blind. Below: Art Deco style shop front in Swanage – note use of metal.



102. Early shop fronts were simple, often consisting solely of bow fronted display window with separate entrance. Surrounds developed to enclose and to provide greater emphasis to the window and entrance, and as larger sheets of plate glass became available during the mid-nineteenth century, to incorporate signage on fascia boards. It was usual for shop front designs to be arranged and detailed according to classical architectural principles, and late Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts were often elaborately detailed, incorporating features such as threshold mosaics which often survive to the present. As urban expansion resulted in the provision of purpose built shopping parades, standardised designs were produced by major joinery firms.
103. Shop fronts were traditionally designed according to sometimes loosely applied classical principles. The objective was to bring a sense of visual order and containment to the frontage, and detailing often also helped the relationship between the shop front and upper floors of buildings into which they were inserted. Here for example, the 'cornice' plays a particularly important architectural role in dividing the elements.



Above: Generalised details for the two most common standard types. There will be many cases where the detailing of historic examples differs from the schemes shown, however the basic components and principles of design are fairly consistent. Above left: parade type. Above right: free standing type – see also detail below left. Below right: mullion detail. Note the beading is always on the inside.



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104. Generally speaking, shop fronts were traditionally constructed from timber, and this material will usually complement buildings of Edwardian and earlier date best. Use of steel emerged during the inter-war years and is a feature of Art Deco design, examples of which occur in Swanage. Paint is now the standard finish for timber shop fronts, though the hardwood used for many late Victorian and Edwardian shop fronts was originally varnished.
 105. Signs applied to shop fascia boards were commonly painted in the past, though methods such as applying gold leaf lettering against a black background were also popular. These finishes remain the most appropriate for traditional shop fronts, however similar effects can often be achieved using matt vinyl or cut metal lettering. Bulky signage with internal lighting, and plastic sign boards are rarely compatible with traditional shop fronts.
 106. Making alterations to a shop front contained within a listed building, will require listed building consent. This will include where you are changing or adding signage.

Around the District

107. Swanage has a good collection of Edwardian shopping parades, and a number of attractive inter-war and early post war frontages. Many historic details survive, though the uniformity of the parades – largely intact above ground floor level – has suffered from alteration. In renewing or altering shop fronts in Swanage conservation area you should aim to conserve historic details or take opportunities to reinstate them, observing traditional design principles.
108. Wareham contains a good range of early shop fronts characterised by use of bow windows. A number of simple late nineteenth and early twentieth century designs also exist. Most of these shop fronts are contained within listed buildings and all contained within Wareham conservation area. In altering shop fronts in Wareham you should aim to conserve historic details or take opportunities to restore them, in all cases observing traditional design principles.
109. Smaller settlements within the District contain few examples of historic shop fronts, though a range of ‘cottage’ based enterprises did once operate within most them. Examples of the frontages of now vacant or converted shops can be seen in Bere Regis, Langton Matravers and Lytchett Minster.

Box 11: Shop fronts

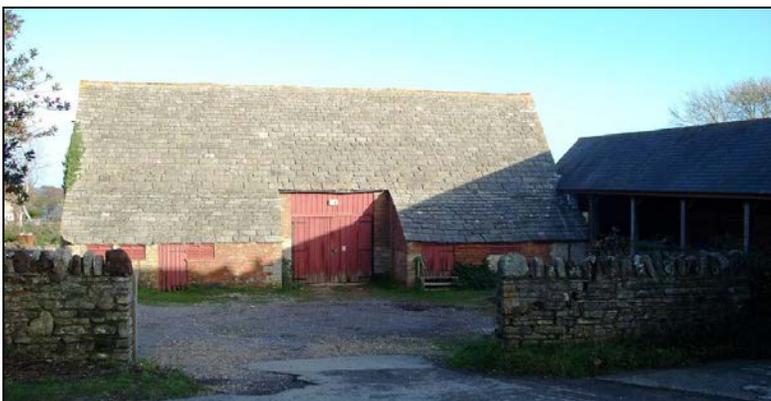
1. Conserve historic shop front designs and details, or reinstate them where the opportunity arises.
2. Use traditional signage materials and techniques within conservation areas and on listed buildings.
3. Apply traditional principles in the design of new shop fronts.

Agricultural buildings

110. Historically, as now, agriculture in Purbeck involved a mixture of livestock and arable farming. A range of specialised buildings existed to serve different functions, the design and use of which reflected processes reliant on human and animal labour. These buildings were usually arranged in complementary groups, linked by functional spaces and routes, and normally built in close association with domestic dwelling – the archetypal farm house and farm yard. Purbeck contains many traditional agricultural buildings which make a significant contribution to local distinctiveness. Having an informed understanding of character will help you in achieving both conservation, and sensitive adaptation for new uses.

Threshing barn

111. Threshing barns are the largest traditional agricultural buildings seen around the District. They are often described as ‘double height’ given equivalence to a two storey building, however the interior is typically open to the rafters. Barns are normally rectangular in shape and have three or more ‘bays’ (segments into which the building can be visually broken). They are characterised by opposing double height openings, originally fitted with double doors. The largest barns around the District have two sets of doors. Barns have a functional ‘front’ and ‘back’, the front (main) entrance often the larger of the two and commonly covered by a cart porch. Where forming part of a group the main entrance often faces onto the ‘farm yard’, though may also face out towards the fields from which crops were brought for threshing. Barns often have few if any other openings, and where they occur they are limited in size, normally providing ventilation or placed to encourage barn owls to nest and provide natural vermin control. Barns usually lacked internal subdivision, though the different parts of the building had functions. Mezzanine floors may sometimes be found within either side of the central threshing floor. The openness of the interior plays a crucial role in the functional and architectural character of a threshing barn.



Left: A typical threshing barn, with a rectangular three bay form with central entrance and half-hipped cart porch. Here the main entrance faces towards the fields. Right: barn whose entrance lacks a porch, either side of which are lean-to extensions whose roofs combine with that of the barn to create a sweeping ‘catslide’. Lean-to extensions are commonly found in these positions.

112. In historic use, wagons would enter a threshing barn beneath the porch (if present), unloading cut sheaves of cereals into one of the side bays. These were threshed (ears separated from the stems) in the central bay ('threshing floor'), the resulting straw stacked in the remaining bay. Winnowing (separating chaff from grain) was achieved by varying the draft flowing through the building by opening and closing the doors at either side. Grain was then removed for storage in a granary. Industrialisation led to some barns being modified to house machinery. This is particularly seen on farms of the former Bladen Estate around Affpuddle, where chimneys or louvred ventilation towers may be present as later additions.



Spring Garden Barn. A recently restored cob and thatch threshing barn in Turnerspuddle, with typical three bay form and cart porch.

113. Where conversion is necessary, barns best suit open plan uses, as these are most effective in preserving the sense of internal space so important to the character of such buildings. Open plan uses also allow maximum lighting of the interior through existing openings, avoiding the need to punch holes in the walls or roof which would again harm character. In all cases, you should aim to conserve or consider reinstating original details such as the double doors.

Granary

114. Granaries are small buildings within which grain was stored. The most basic forms are square in shape with pyramidal roof, built from tarred plank weatherboard and elevated off the ground on staddle stones. More permanent versions were constructed from brick or stone, elevated off the ground on arches. Elevation was to protect the grain from damp and rodent attack. In some cases granaries were set above a cart shed, the granary accessed via an external stair. Aside from the entrance, openings were limited in size, and were intended to allow ventilation and admittance of owls for vermin control. Build quality of masonry structures can be high, with decorative treatments reflecting the value of the former contents. Granaries usually occur in close association with threshing barns given the functional association of the two building types.

115. Given the small size and original role of granaries, they are well suited to serve as general storage buildings, or other ancillary functions as part of a general farm yard conversion scheme.



Left: brick granary built on arches (Woodstreet, now demolished). Right: weatherboard granary on staddle stones (East Holme). Both granaries are/were built adjacent to threshing barns.

Cart shed

116. Cart sheds are open fronted buildings sub-divided into equally sized bays using pillars. This type of building was historically used to store farm vehicles. These buildings usually lack openings to the rear or sides, and are either single storey, or built in combination with a first floor granary.
117. Cart sheds are ideally suited for continued use for the parking of vehicles, as cars can usually be comfortably accommodated. Use for garaging avoids the need to provide additional parking within a conversion scheme. In undertaking any conversion you should aim to conserve the defining characteristics of large unenclosed frontage and open interior. This is most effectively achieved by setting clear glazing behind the openings.



Flint and brick cart shed with granary over (West Lulworth). External steps serve the latter. A small stable which extends to the rear fills the fourth bay.

Shelter Shed

118. Shelter sheds are open fronted, single storey structures built to provide shelter for livestock. These buildings are differentiated from cart sheds by their longer and lower forms. Shelter sheds have often been modified through informal infilling of openings with block work or boarding, adapting the buildings for use as cow sheds.
119. In common with cart sheds, where converting a shelter shed you should aim to conserve the defining characteristics of large unenclosed frontage and open interior. Again this is

most effectively achieved by setting clear glazing behind the openings. In cases where the building has already been modified by blocking up openings however, some 'formalisation' of the arrangement (e.g. tidying, and/or substitution of materials used in infill) may also be appropriate.



Shelter shed (Barnston). Three bays shown, the roof of which is propped. Bays are wider and roof lower than would be found in a cart shed.

Cow House

120. Cow houses are commonly single storey buildings which often extend around two or three sides of a central yard. The front of a cow house is normally characterised by a regular series of doors and small windows. The rear elevation is normally blank, though gable end entrances may be present. Cow houses may contain stalls, troughs and wooden partitions, while floor surfaces are laid to facilitate drainage. Roofs may carry cowls or ridge vents.



Limewashed cow houses (Wilkswood). Note funnel vents in the roofs.

121. Cow houses offer good opportunities for conversion given that they are fully enclosed, contain windows and have internal layouts which you can easily adopt as a basis for subdivision.

Stable

122. Stables were built in a range of sizes, though on large farms where many horses would have been used as draught animals in the past, they often bear close resemblance to cow sheds. Stables frequently have a first floor/room in the roof, used as a hay loft and

accessed via loading doors and 'pitching eyes' (holes through which hay could be thrown from a cart). Split 'stable' doors are often paired with, or flanked by windows on the front elevation. Other elevations usually lack openings. As horses were valuable commodities this is often reflected in the quality of building materials, construction and fittings.



Small brick stable with corrugated roof. Note the internal shutters on the windows – a common means of window closure on agricultural buildings generally which were rarely historically glazed.

123. Stables offer similar conversion potential to cow sheds given that they are again fully enclosed, contain windows and have internal layouts which you can easily adopt as a basis for subdivision.

Other Types

124. The above list is not exhaustive and various combinations can occur of and within these types. Other traditional farm buildings include pig sties, dovecotes, open-sided hay barns and miscellaneous types whose functions could range from root store to brew house. Sometimes unusual compositions occur, particularly in 'model farmsteads' – those purpose built according to the advanced technological principles of the day. Good examples survive around Briantspuddle. These often used steam or water power to run crop and feed processing machinery, and therefore sometimes have engine houses with chimneys, or water wheels. Such features add considerable interest and you should always conserve them.



Left: dovecote set on a barn roof at Coombe. 'Pigeon holes' are also commonly built into the walls of barns. These are now more likely to support important colonies of birds such as house sparrows. Right: barn fitted with a waterwheel at Blashenwell.

Corrugated iron structures

125. Corrugated iron has been in use since the nineteenth century, and there is growing interest in the preservation of historic structures built using the material. The condition and format of corrugated iron structures may often leave limited scope for conversion, though some innovative schemes have been successfully carried out elsewhere in the country. Elements of buildings constructed in corrugated iron – for example roofs – should not be automatically discarded or replaced in a conversion scheme. In this context you can use the material to provide visual variety in terms of form, appearance and texture, whilst giving an authentic functional character.

Box 12: Agricultural buildings

1. Ensure that you understand the type and past function of your agricultural buildings.
2. Ensure that conversion schemes conserve internal and external character.