

## **5 Built Environment**

The quality of the built environment has a significant impact on our everyday lives. It is important that all development irrespective of its nature or location respects its surrounding environment, is safe to use and fit for its intended purpose. When sensitively handled new development can complement the existing built environment and strengthen sense of place and character. This chapter contains policies that are designed to protect specific features of the built environment and protect good design and help to achieve the Council's spatial objectives.

## Policy B 1

### Street Scene

A development proposal should demonstrate a high quality of design in terms of its layout, form and contribution to the character of the area by:

The character of streets and other public spaces has a major impact upon the quality of our environment. It derives from many factors: the basic design criteria listed in policy B1 are fundamental, but so too are many other influences such as the nature of shop fronts, street furniture, lighting and signage.

Making street frontages 'active' adds interest, safety, life and vitality to the public realm. Street frontages provide the setting for buildings and help to make an essential contribution to what constitutes the character of an area. The quality of the built environment is greatly enhanced by considering site planning and the integrated use of hard landscaping (e.g. paving street furniture). However, careful thought needs to be given to the scale, position and potential impact of signage, lighting and street furniture: the objective should be to minimise visual 'clutter' whilst also ensuring that places are safe, convenient and comfortable to use.

Shop fronts are important visual components of both individual buildings and the street scene. Many are changed or renewed frequently, and it is essential that the design and materials relate effectively to the scale and character of the premises and their neighbours. Solid security shutters can harm the vitality of town and village centres outside opening hours by obscuring shop displays, attracting graffiti and creating a 'fortress' effect. Hence it is important to promote the use of more subtle security measures wherever possible.

This policy addresses these issues together, so that they can be considered in a comprehensive and coherent manner when formulating development proposals or enhancement schemes.

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