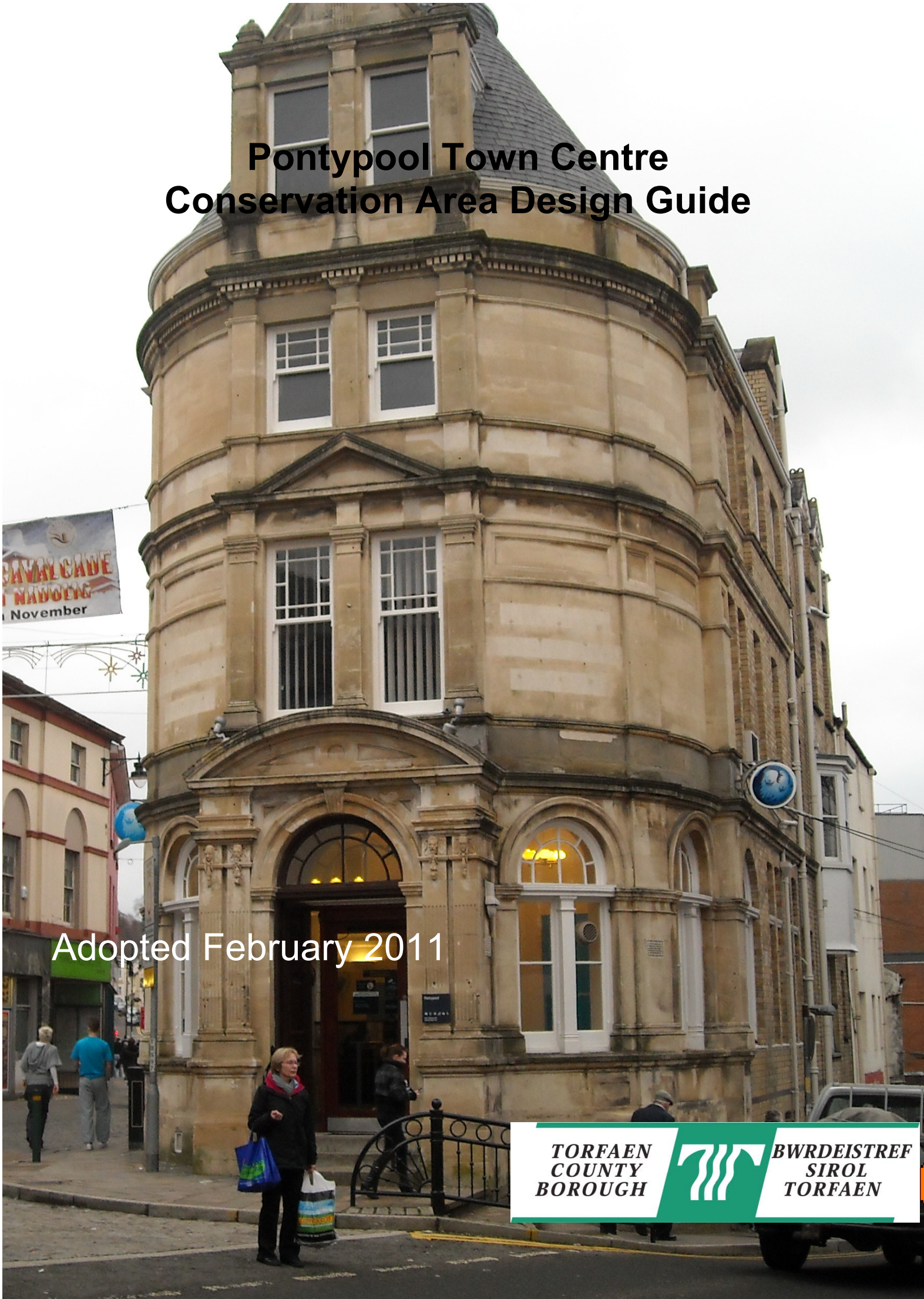
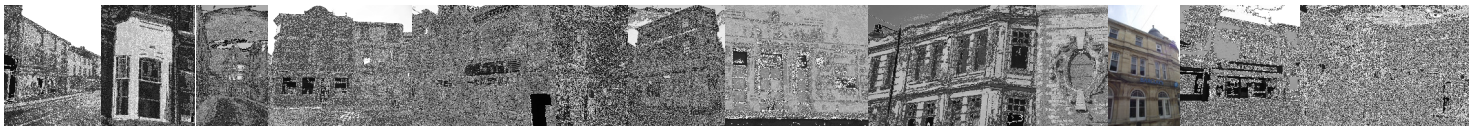
Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Design Guide



Adopted February 2011

TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH

BWRDEISTREF SIROL TORFAEN



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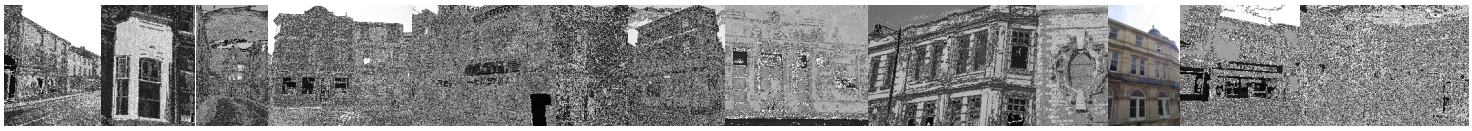
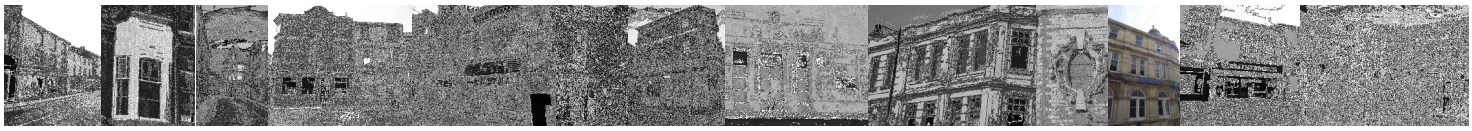
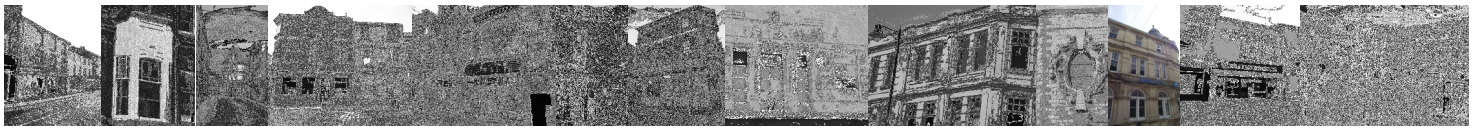




1. CONTEXT



1.1 Introduction

The aims of this Conservation Area Design Guide are to protect the historic character of Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area (PTCCA) and to ensure that all new development whether alterations, repairs or new building respects the significance and values of the designated area.

The care of the heritage buildings (i.e. all properties built before the First World War and notable buildings of architectural and group value built before the Second World War) is particularly important as it enables conservation to play an active part in regeneration, as heritage has an economic value. This can be achieved by ensuring that change is managed in a way that sustains and enhances the historic character of the built environment, without overly constraining or inhibiting development, by preventing inappropriate designs and promoting relevant change and development.

The purpose of this Document is to provide design and maintenance guidance for buildings throughout the Conservation Area to ensure that such works meet the required standards for the Conservation Area. It sets out design principles but does not seek to dictate design solutions.

The photographs in this Document have been taken throughout the PTCCA to provide examples of good and inappropriate built design practice.

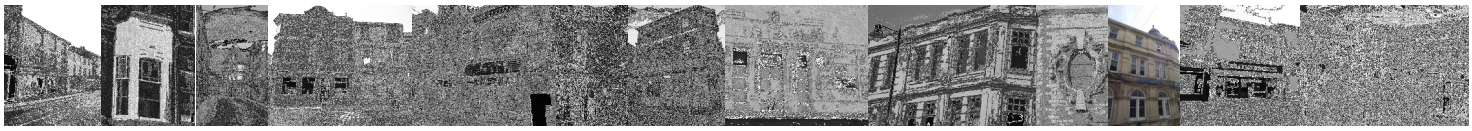
This Guide aims to provide those considering works that involve alterations, repairs or development of buildings or sites with some advice on maintenance, repair and the design of alterations and/or new buildings.

It offers advice on the reinstatement and repair of original features using traditional materials and methods, the importance for all existing and proposed development to respect their settings and location, as well as broader guidance on the principles of urban design.

This advice is both general and detailed in relation to future Planning Applications. However, this advice is not exhaustive nor does it provide a detailed specification of works. This Document does not offer advice on structural defects and issues, for which appropriate professional assistance should be sought. Where Planning Permission is required, proposals will be expected to reflect the design principles set out in this Document.

Where works do not require Planning Permission, land and building owners and residents will be encouraged to follow these guidelines to protect the historic character of the Conservation Area.

Well designed buildings should always respect their context and respond to it in such a way that there is a mutual enhancement rather



than a competition between the old and the new. This is particularly true for historic town centres such as Pontypool where poor modern new buildings or inappropriate alterations to historic buildings can have a disproportionate impact on the wider built environment.

It is the intention to adopt this Document as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the Development Plan (i.e. the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (2000) and the Adopted Gwent Structure Plan (1996)) following a 6 week consultation process. When this Document is adopted as SPG to the Development Plan it will be a Material Consideration in the determination of Planning Applications submitted for development within the Boundary of the PTCCA. It should be noted that this Document also contains general design and maintenance advice for buildings located within the PTCCA and elements of this advice/best practice relate to works which do not require Planning Permission but have been included in Appendix 1 of this Document for completeness i.e. a single design document for the PTCCA.

This Document has been informed by and should be read in conjunction with, the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan which provides further detail on the special characteristics of the Conservation Area (including character areas, building types and significant building features) and its ongoing management.

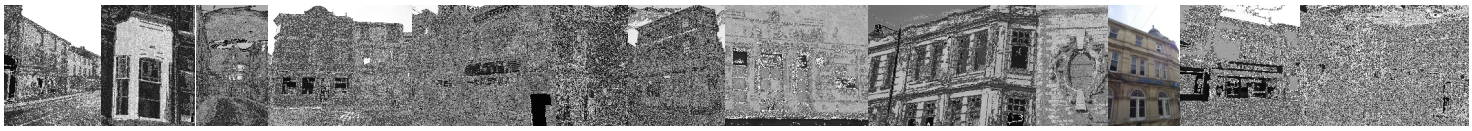
If further information or explanation is required regarding any of the terms and technical information used in this Document please contact the Council's Conservation Officer or Development Control section (contact details provided on Page 58 of this Document). In addition a Glossary Of Terms is contained in Appendix 2.

1.2 How To Use This Design Guide

This Design Guide has been prepared to provide guidance for:

- All owners of both heritage and more modern properties within PTCCA who are considering alterations and repairs to their buildings;
- All developers, landowners, building owners and professionals considering the construction of new buildings within the Conservation Area;
- TCBC Officers when providing assistance to building and landowners; and
- For TCBC Officers when considering Planning Applications.

Any changes in the Conservation Area requiring Planning Permission (e.g. alterations and new developments) are considered in the various



sections of this Document. The following categories of development have different characteristics and constraints which require different design solutions.

- Heritage buildings include all properties built before the First World War and notable buildings of architectural and group value built before the Second World War. Of notable importance are Listed Buildings and those which make particular contributions to the overall townscape quality of the Conservation Area, which are identified in the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan (2010).
- Proposals for new buildings and extensions should consider their visual impact on the area and respect the setting within the Conservation Area.
- Though not requiring Planning Permission, the information in Appendix 1 on maintenance is particularly helpful as it will usually limit the need for costly repairs and replacements. More detailed assistance on particular building elements can be found from a variety of sources, but the concern of this Document is to emphasise the importance of early and appropriate action.

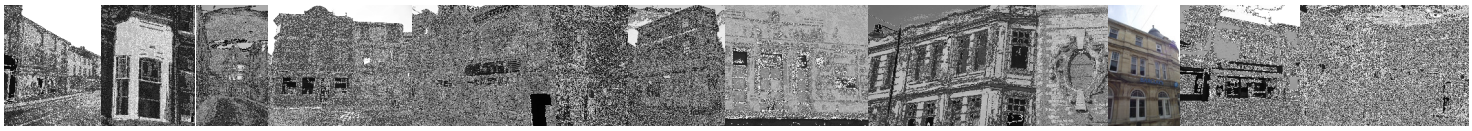
When repairs, replacements and additions to any buildings within the Conservation Area are being proposed, this Document emphasises the necessity for consideration of the context, the setting and the history of the building. The examples discussed and shown in the photographs provide guidance on how to approach various tasks. Also the use of old photographs can sometimes suggest appropriate designs

Every Planning Application will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the circumstances of each property. Owners are encouraged to discuss proposed changes with the Council's Development Control, Conservation and Building Control Officers.

1.3 Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area

Pontypool was the first industrialised town in Wales. The Town created wealth and offered expertise in ironworking and associated industries over a period lasting hundreds of years, from 1425 into the second half of the 20th Century. The Town developed around its early road network and its economic success led to most of the buildings being replaced during the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

The earliest and smaller vernacular buildings, of which the Market House is a good remaining example, were replaced by well proportioned and elegant Georgian styles relying on restrained and



simple detailing. As the 19th Century progressed, a more exuberant style became fashionable with extremely ornate cornices, mouldings, windows and other details and there are several notable examples of this High Victorian style of buildings.

The 19th Century buildings all tend to have a strong vertical emphasis and are constructed from either the local Pennant Sandstone, laid in rough courses, or bricks under a Welsh Slate roof. Smooth render was often used, with some evidence of engraved stone courses giving the impression of Ashlar construction.

The roofs are usually of a simple construction with side gables and form a relatively low proportion of the total height of the building. Few buildings appear to have used the roof space for accommodation and dormer windows are accordingly rare, although there are some examples where dormer windows form an important architectural element of a façade.

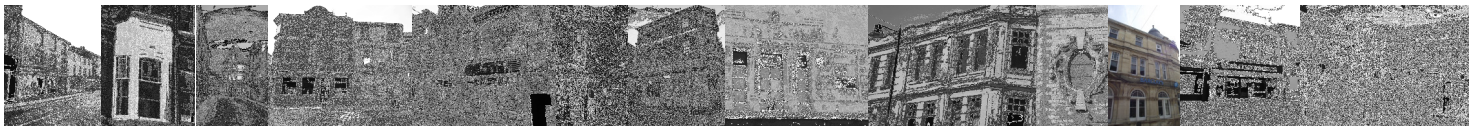
Windows are relatively simple and are almost inevitably vertical sliding sash with large windows on the first floor and smaller windows above. First floor oriel windows are relatively common on three storey buildings, especially those built towards the end of the 19th Century. Relatively few original shop fronts exist although the majority would have followed the traditional pattern with stallrisers and prominent pilasters.

There are also a significant number of early 20th Century buildings within Pontypool. These were designed to a different set of design principles and tend to have a horizontal rather then a vertical emphasis, with the majority of the visual interest and ornamentation being provided by the fenestration.

As a result, the Town Centre includes a large number of fine heritage buildings from a mix of periods, including notable Listed Buildings. Many are found in key locations and corner sites along the main route through the Conservation Area and provide important focal points in the townscape.

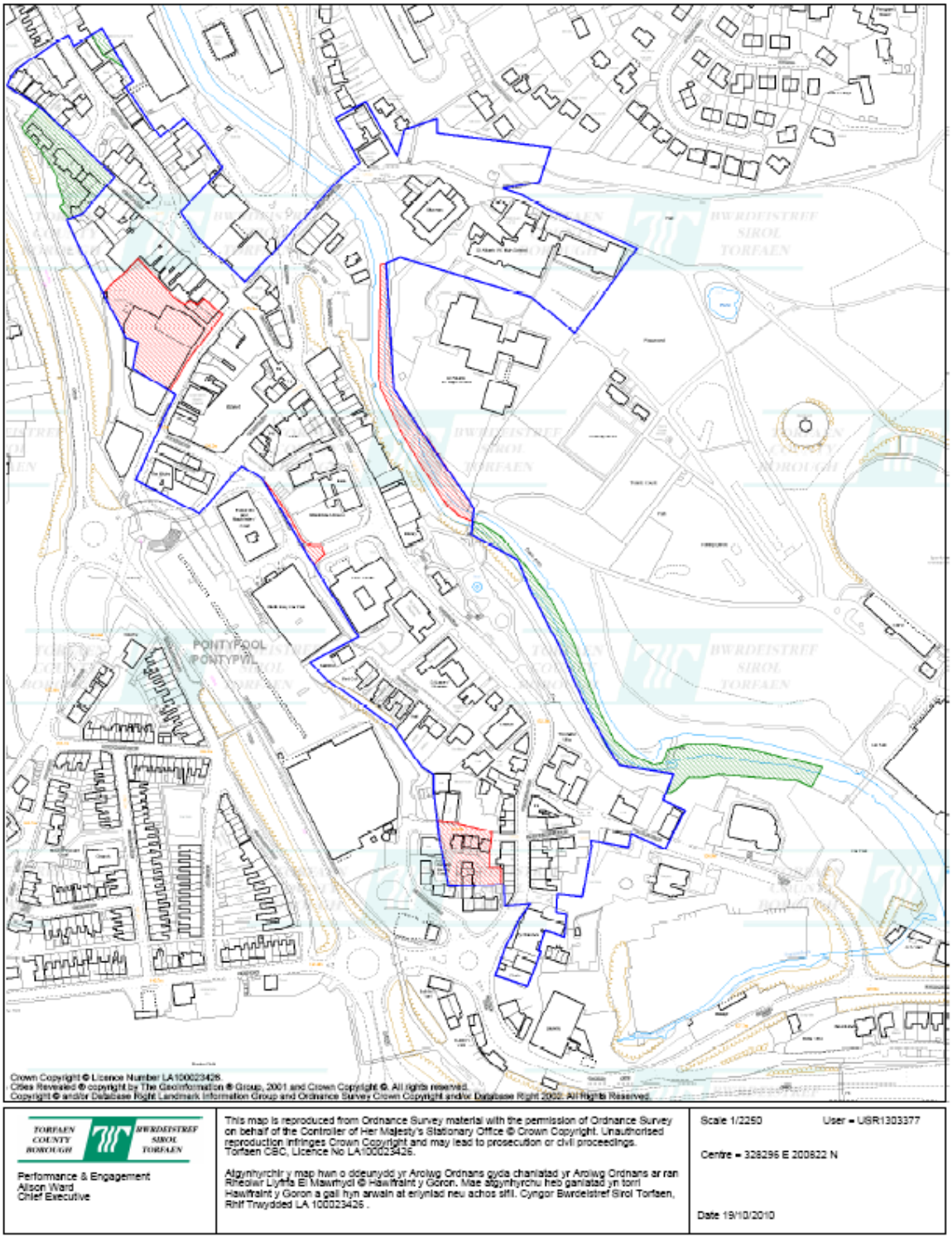
The spacious quality of Hanbury Road and its stone buildings contrasts with the narrower streets, bordered by predominantly two and three storey rendered buildings, which dominate Commercial Street and the Market area. A notable feature of the Town Centre is how the mix of styles, forms and materials of the buildings has achieved an attractive and high quality heritage townscape.

The Conservation Area Boundary also includes an area across the Afon Llwyd River adjacent to Pontypool Park, Pontypool Museum and the much extended Hanbury Mansion (which is now St Albans School and adjacent flats). The sloping nature of the Town enables views of the Park to appear between buildings. Hanbury Road with its more

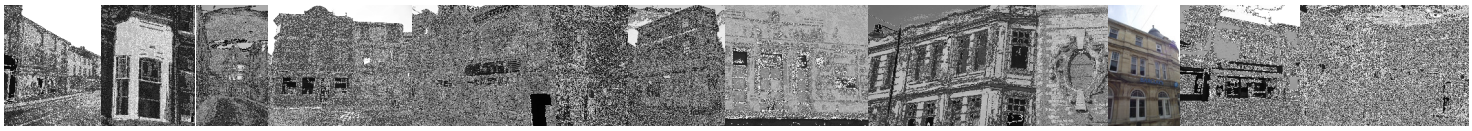


spacious setting and civic scale is complemented by a wider view of the Italian Gardens.

The key assets of the Conservation Area include the variety of heritage townscapes, the quality of 19th and early 20th Century architecture, and the views created by the River and the Park.



Map showing the boundaries of the PTCCA at the current point in time. Although the Boundary amendments have been approved by Council, they are not fully in force until advertised in the London Gazette and a local paper. Therefore, are in an interim phase as shown on the above plan. The red areas are to be removed from the PTCCA whilst those in green are to be added.



1.4 Planning And Policy Context

This Document will be adopted by TCBC as SPG to both the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (July 2000) and the Adopted Gwent Structure Plan (1996). Once it has been adopted then it will become a Material Consideration in the determination of Planning Applications within the Boundaries of the PTCCA.

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (2010) sets the context for sustainable land use policy within Wales and the need for the promotion of good design. Overall design guidance in PPW is supplemented by Technical Advice Note 12 (2009) 'Design'. Design and Access Statements are required in Wales for Planning Applications and Listed Building Consents from June 2009. Design and Access Statements should cover accessibility; environmental sustainability; character; movement to, from and within a development; and community safety.

Local Planning Policy

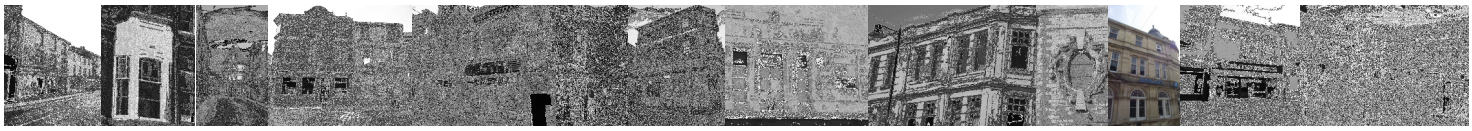
Statutory planning policies affecting PTCCA are contained in sections of the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (July 2000), with the objective to preserve and protect the essential features upon which Torfaen's heritage and character have been built. The Adopted Torfean Local Plan contains General Policy G1 which will be applied to all development proposals addressing a number of issues including design.

The Adopted Torfaen Local Plan together with the Adopted Gwent Structure Plan, contain a number of policies that aim to protect the appearance and enhance its visual, architectural and historic character. In addition there are policies, which ensure that developments should respect the scale and character of both the surrounding buildings and the Conservation Area. The relevant Policies for Conservation Areas are identified below.

Torfaen Local Plan Policies

Policy H1 (Criterion C) seeks to ensure that development within a Conservation Area should preserve the scale, layout and character of the Conservation Area.

In Conservation Areas the presumption is generally one of preservation of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Demolition will only be permitted for buildings, which do not contribute positively to the Conservation Area and where proposals for the future use of those sites have been submitted and approved. Demolition or part demolition



of any building or feature within a Conservation Area will be assessed against Policy H2 of the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan.

The demolition of Listed Buildings and buildings within Conservation Areas are both controlled by Planning Legislation. The demolition of Listed Buildings will be resisted unless it can be clearly shown that every effort has been made to preserve the building and it is beyond economic repair. Demolition or part demolition of a Listed Building will be assessed against Policy H3 of the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan.

The Adopted Torfaen Local Plan also contains policies that seek to protect the setting of Listed Buildings from inappropriate alterations and extensions (including works to the interior of buildings). Care will therefore, need to be taken to ensure that development proposals relating to Listed Buildings are architecturally sensitive and respect the historic value of the building.

Policy H4 states that the alteration or extension of Listed Buildings will only be permitted where the proposals reflect the original building in respect of the setting of the site and the mass, form, scale, materials, colour, character and design of the building.

Gwent Structure Plan Policies

Policy BC1 states that the County Council will favour the protection and enhancement of the best environmental qualities of towns and villages.

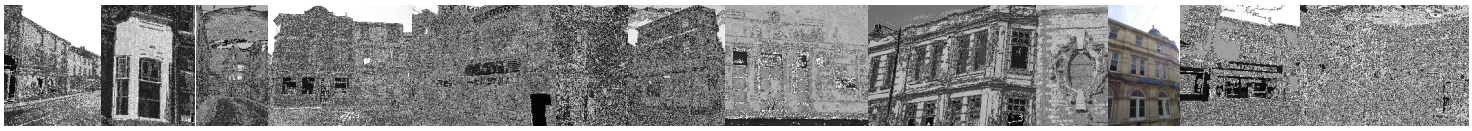
Policy BC2 states that the County Council will favour the protection and enhancement of Conservation Areas and buildings or groups of buildings of architectural or historic merit.

Local Development Plan (2006-2021)

The LDP will replace the Adopted Local Plan and the Adopted Gwent Structure Plan as the Development Plan for the Country Borough, on its adoption. It is intended to review the PTCCA Design Guide once the LDP is adopted in order to reflect the policies contained in the LDP. The updated version of this Document (which will reflect the Adopted LDP) will then be adopted as SPG to the Adopted LDP and will provide additional guidance to the LDP.

Permitted Development Rights

As the majority of Pontypool Conservation Area is in commercial use, these buildings have few Permitted Development Rights. It needs to be recognised by all such owners that any changes to their buildings may require Planning Permission. Current Permitted Development Rights for relatively minor types of development are only acceptable for solely residential properties and this will include the St James' Field



area. On an incremental basis, even small changes could have a significant adverse effect on the streetscape of the Conservation Area so it is therefore, important that the recommendations in this Document are followed by owners of residential properties.

1.5 Comprehensive Design Principles

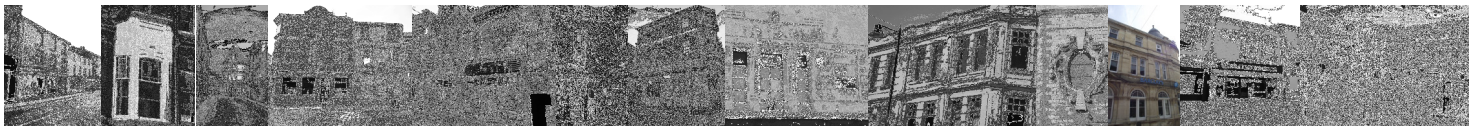
The Cadw Consultation Draft Document 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance – for the sustainable management of the historic environment in Wales' (July 2009) identifies six key principles which provide a basis for the policy and management recommendations contained in this Design Guide.

- *Principle 1. Significant places will be managed to sustain their values;*
- *Principle 2. Understanding the significance of places is vital;*
- *Principle 3. The historic environment is a shared resource:*
- *Principle 4. Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment;*
- *Principle 5. Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent; and*
- *Principle 6. Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.*

The Pontypool Town Centre Regeneration Strategy (adopted by TCBC in November 2008) contains specific aims and objectives relating to the built environment which are supported by this Design Guide:

'We want Pontypool to be renowned for its distinctive architecture and the quality of its streets and spaces by:

- ensuring that the full potential of Pontypool's built assets is realised, celebrating existing buildings of architectural and cultural merit;
- bringing about the refurbishment and reuse of empty buildings;
- creating high quality street frontage that has coherence but retains/restores the character of individual buildings;
- insisting on high design quality for new buildings, spaces and infrastructure that is consistent with the vision for Pontypool;
- designing buildings and spaces to minimise resource use and maximise energy efficiency;
- ensuring good maintenance of buildings and the public realm to create a clean, safe environment.'



It is necessary to recognise, to support and to sustain local distinctiveness and specifically, the distinctive character of individual areas within the Conservation Area. The subtle differences that give local streetscapes their own identity and character need to be reflected in proposals for any change and new development. The Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) and Management Plan for Pontypool (2010) provides further description and Character Area analysis.

In the context of this guidance, it is clear that an important consideration will be the protection of key views that add to the qualities of the heritage environment and protect the visual values of the Conservation Area. Examples include the long distance views across Pontypool Park towards the Town Centre and the views along the spine route including Hanbury Road and Commercial Street.

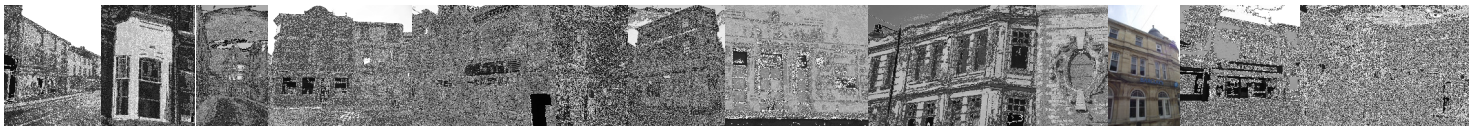
Designers and planners will have to ensure that the design principles and concepts identified in this guidance have been applied to any development proposal and that each Planning Application includes a Design and Access Statement which responds to the requirements set out in TAN12 Design (2009).

More specific and detailed design principles are set out in Section 2 Guidance.

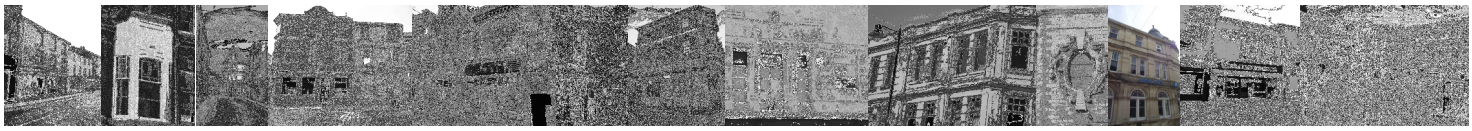
1.6 Choosing an Agent

Working within a conservation area such as Pontypool Town Centre usually requires a great deal of technical knowledge, an appreciation of the historic environment, a working knowledge of conservation principles and an ability to produce innovative design solutions.

It is therefore, strongly recommended that a qualified architect and member of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) is selected as this choice is likely to save a significant amount of time and expense later in the project.



2. GUIDANCE



2.1 Introduction

The preservation, protection and enhancement of buildings and the physical environment within the PTCCA depends on the standard of the following:

- A sound approach to repair and replacement;
- Exploiting opportunities for alterations and improvements;
- The application of appropriate design principles for new buildings & extensions;
- Regular maintenance of all buildings; and
- The quality of the public realm.

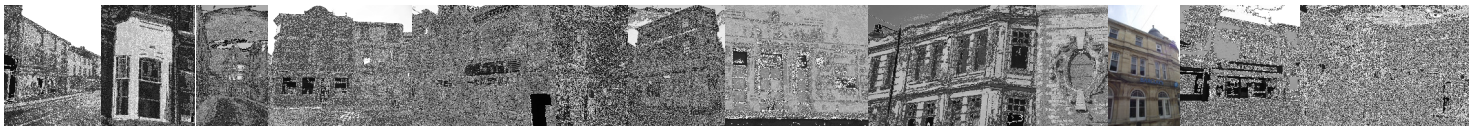
The Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2010) identified several distinct character areas, each of which includes a mix of building categories relating to use, construction & age and require a particular and specific approach to design control. However, there is a great deal of overlap and common ground between the guidance for all areas, in respect of the fundamental principles and method of approach which should be followed.

All the buildings built in Pontypool before the First World War and notable buildings of architectural and group value built before the Second World War may be classed as heritage buildings for the purpose of this Document, as even those with little architectural or historic value in their own right have a substantial impact upon the historic environment and the wider streetscape will benefit through the incorporation of these principles.

The principal categories of development, which are generally found throughout the PTCCA, are identified in this guidance as:

1. Repairs, reinstatement and improvements to all Heritage Buildings within the Conservation Area

Conservation Areas and their buildings require heritage standards (i.e. a standard above the most basic quality which reflects the higher quality materials and design that is usually found in historic areas and which contributes directly to their attractiveness and value) for development and change. Particularly close control is required in respect of the standards of materials, styles and building techniques for both repair and improvement to existing buildings and for any extensions. Further local guidance on variations within each Character Area is described in the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2010). Specific guidance on these issues is provided in section 2.2.



2. New buildings and extensions within the Conservation Area:

Vacant sites suitable for development within the Conservation Area may have the scope to accommodate new development that enhances the overall quality and character of the Conservation Area. However, whilst different styles and uses of buildings can be accommodated, the majority of the guidance is generic to all forms and types of development.

Specific guidance on these issues is provided in section 2.9.

3. Guidance on the importance of good maintenance of buildings, which is relevant to all buildings of whatever age and design character.

This guidance does not form part of the SPG but can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Advice on the treatment of the public realm and streetscape, which has a very significant impact on the overall quality of the Conservation Area.

This guidance does not form part of the SPG but can be found in Appendix 1.

5. Recommendations on Energy and Environment issues, to ensure future sustainability.

This Information does not form part of the SPG but can be found in Appendix 1.

Examples of the townscape interest at the Commercial Street/George Street junction created by the mix of building designs representing different periods of development from 18th Century to contemporary.

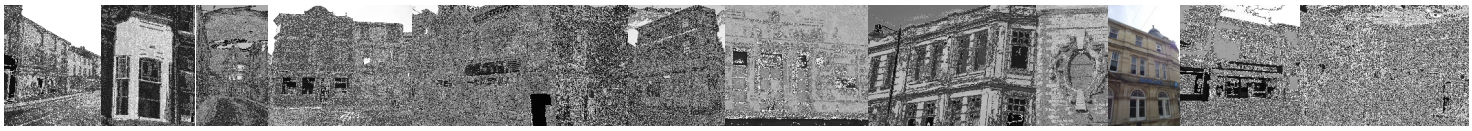
2.2 Repair, Reinstatement And Improvements To Buildings Of Heritage Value

The key to the effective conservation of any built environment is an understanding of the impact of any changes. For repair and improvements to existing heritage buildings, works should not be carried out without establishing:

- Why they are necessary?;
- What they are trying to achieve?; and
- Whether or not they might have any adverse consequences.

A general principle of both conservation and sustainability is that building elements should only be replaced when absolutely unavoidable. For example, historic timber is not only irreplaceable but of a significantly higher quality then most replacement materials. A well maintained 18th Century window is capable of outlasting two or three sets of modern replacement maintenance free Upvc windows. It follows that the repair and maintenance of the existing fabric rather then its replacement is to be encouraged.

Care should be taken to ensure that repairs are correctly carried out, as poor repairs, methods and materials can cause further damage to a



building. Regular pro active maintenance minimises the longer term maintenance and repair budget.

In the case of Listed Buildings there is a fine line between repairs for which formal Listed Building Consent is not required and alterations which materially affect the character of the Listed Building which may require formal Listed Building Consent. Owners of Listed Buildings are therefore advised to contact the Conservation Officer prior to carrying out any repairs or improvements to their buildings. This need for consent applies to the entire building and not merely the front elevation.

Within the Conservation Area, the heritage designation does not prevent change but forms a framework in which the area can develop without losing any of the attributes which make it special. Current standards of best practice recommend that any work to buildings of particular historic value (such as nationally or locally Listed Buildings) should be based on a comprehensively researched conservation plan. The detail of a conservation plan will be based on the nature of the asset and the level of intervention proposed, (See 'Conservation Principles and Practice' by English Heritage and Planning Policy Statement 5 for guidance) a conservation plan should form part of the Design and Access Statement.

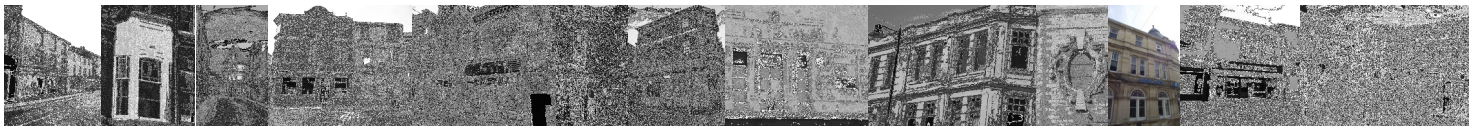
Correct *'**repair**'* should comprise the use of traditional materials and appropriate detailing. Examples include:

- Re-pointing in matching mortar and to exact detailing;
- Replacement of damaged stonework in matching materials; and
- Restoration of historic shop fronts.

Whilst it is unlikely that the first two would require Planning Permission, the last may, depending on the extent of the reinstatement. Advice on this type of works can be found in Appendix 1.

'Reinstatement' of lost architectural features known to have existed on a particular building, should use authentic details and traditional materials. Examples include:

- Replacement of missing or shortened chimney stacks and pots;
- Installation of windows in the original material and to the original pattern;
- Reinstatement of original shop fronts – old photographs can often be used to inform reinstatement as follows:
    - Where historic photographs exist of the shop front to be changed, this information can be used to replicate the original design.



- Where historic photographs do not exist of the shop front to be changed, historic photographs of similar properties within the PTCCA can be used to inform shop front design.

- Re-provision of boundary walls and railings where they have been removed; and
- Re-roofing in natural slate.

'Improvement' means the enhancement of a building by the removal of inappropriate features and their replacement based on traditional principles, although without necessarily 'copying' the original design. This might apply to the following examples:

- Shop fronts;
- Glazing and doors; and
- Gutters and Downpipes.

It is likely that all the above works would require Planning Permission, and therefore the principles contained in this Document would apply directly to them.

2.3 Street Level

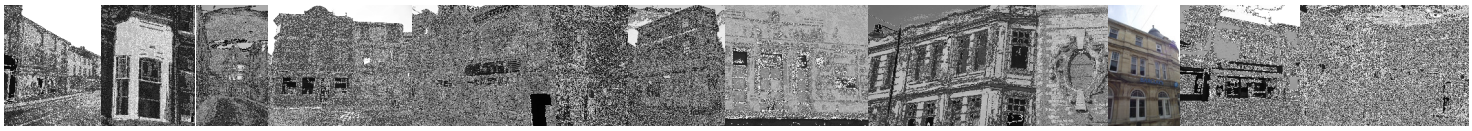
Introduction

The quality of buildings at street level is particularly important in commercial areas where buildings are built tight to the back of the pavement and the combination of shop fronts, signage, canopies and fascias form the dominant visual impression of an area's character.

Entrances and doors

Many of the issues that are relevant to windows and glazing are also applicable to entrances and doors. Where possible, traditional timber doors should be retained and repaired. Replacements, where necessary, should reinstate the original door style if known, or be in keeping with the period of original construction and should be in softwood with a painted finish. Fanlights, door cases and other ancillary features must always be preserved, repaired and maintained. The design and style of the ironmongery is also important and should match the design and style of the original door. External lever handles should be avoided.

Doors to dwellings and commercial properties which have already been replaced and require further renewal should ideally be replaced either by wooden replicas of the original doors where their design is known, or with doors from a similar period and context. In such instances where this is not appropriate, the design will need to be



considered on a case by case basis, although the use of Upvc is unlikely to be acceptable.

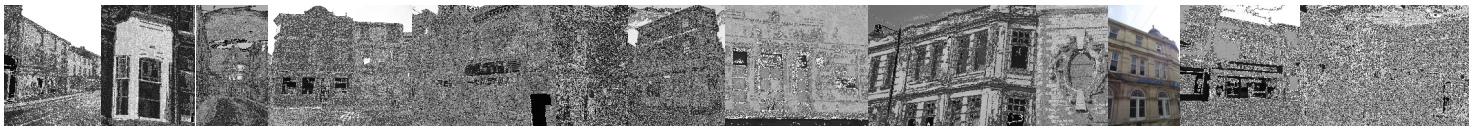
During the 19th Century doors were often surrounded by small porticos or mouldings such as columns and a small canopy in order to give an enhanced status to the occupant. Where such mouldings still exist they should be retained. However, the reinstatement of such features should only be permitted when the design of the original is known and can be replicated in a satisfactory manner.

Alterations to allow access for the disabled are generally encouraged, unless such alterations result in the loss of significant historical features, in which case, alternative design solutions may be more appropriate.

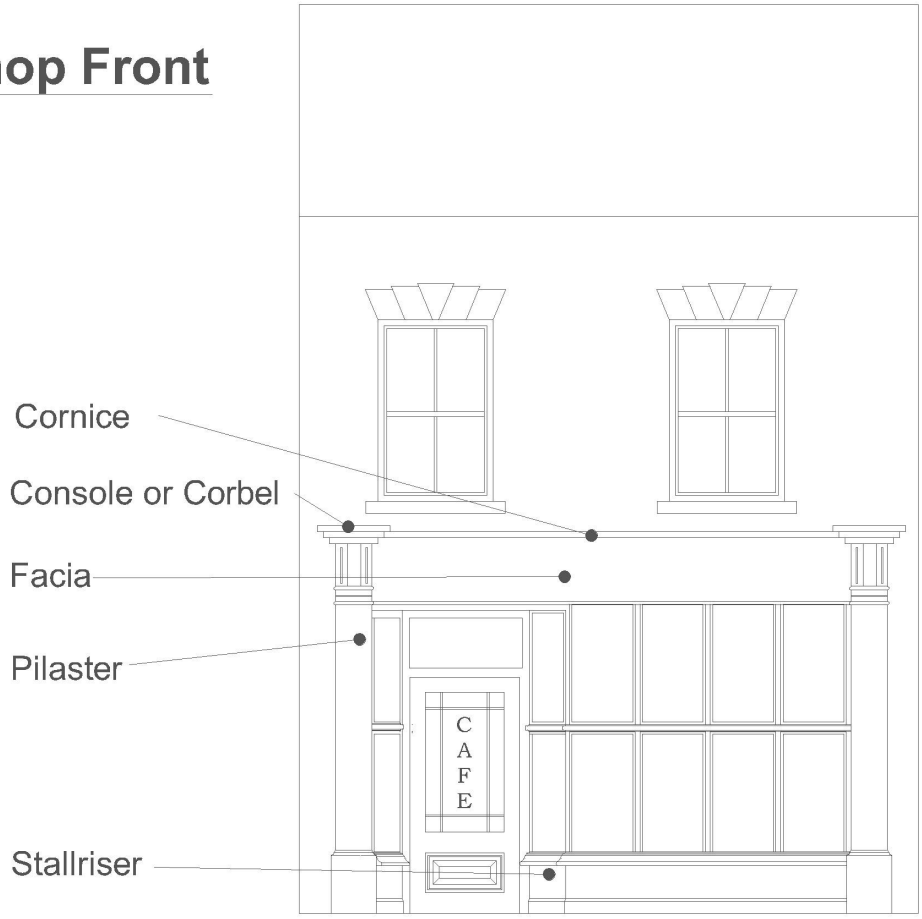
2.4 Repair And Reinstatement of Traditional Shop Fronts

Shop fronts and doors

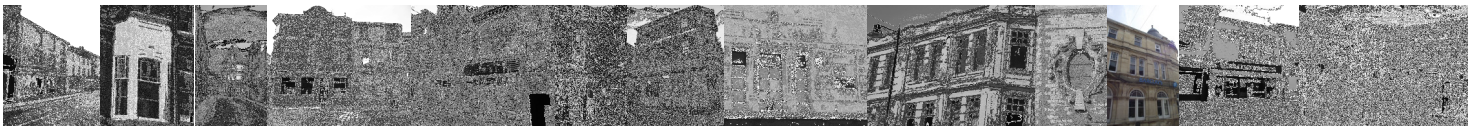
The traditional shop front forms a ‘frame’ for the window display and are formed of five components: The stallriser is below the window, the pilasters are beside the window, the fascia is above the window and the consoles or corbels act as capitals to the pilasters and frame the fascia. Finally the cornice forms the top of the fascia and acts as a water tight ‘roof’ to the fascia.

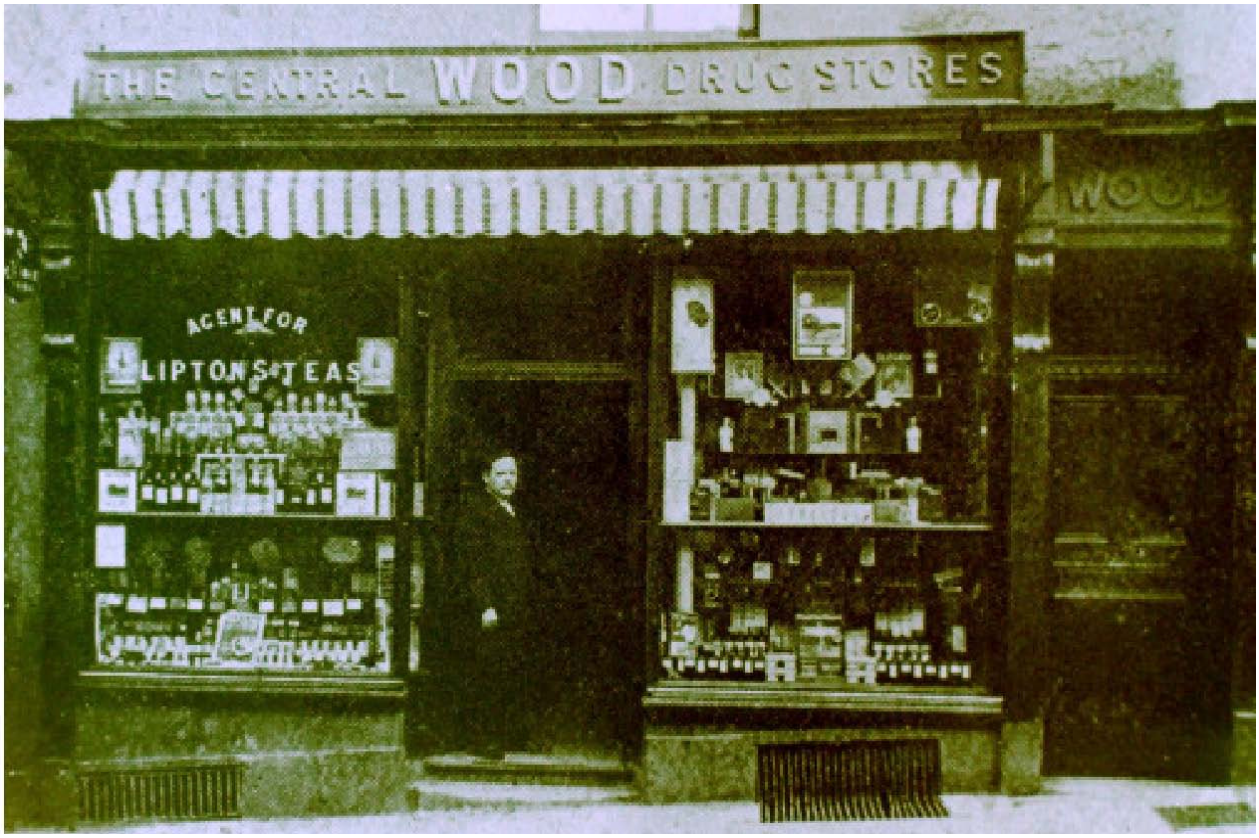


The Ideal Shop Front



The proportions of each component should form a balanced composition. The window should be sub-divided vertically to maintain proportions characteristic of the building where this is appropriate for its historic context. The entrance to the building may be central or to one side depending on the width of the property. The fascia should be finished at the top with a cornice moulding and contained on each side by a console or corbel, which acts as the capital to the pilasters. Where separate buildings have been combined to form a single unit, each building should have its own distinct frontage to maintain the rhythm and proportions of the streetscape. The same fascia should not be carried across both facades.





Existing traditional shop fronts or surviving components should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Original features may be concealed beneath later facings. Where shop fronts have been completely lost but photographic evidence of their original design exists, a detailed replica is most appropriate. Where no evidence of the original exists, a high quality contemporary design that follows the principles of the original 'framing' could be used.

The replacement of historic shop fronts where they still survive is unlikely to be acceptable unless it can be clearly demonstrated that such fronts are beyond reasonable repair and that the replacement shop front would be visually almost identical to the original.

Poor quality, inappropriate designs and materials or badly maintained shop fronts have a detrimental impact on the street scene and the economic health of the area. The examples above demonstrate how important historic locations have been badly damaged by insensitive modern designs and materials at ground floor level.

Traditional shop fronts were almost always painted stained wooden shop fronts are unlikely to be acceptable. Colours should be slightly muted and from a range of traditional colours. The very bright colours often used now were impossible to make using natural pigments and appear incongruous in a historic environment.

Traditional shop fronts should be constructed from wood or cast iron, although more contempory quality materials such as stainless steel or aluminium may be acceptable in modern designs. Upvc is unlikely to be acceptable in any form.

Example of a poor shop front.

Example of a good shop front.

Fascias, Signs, Canopies And Blinds

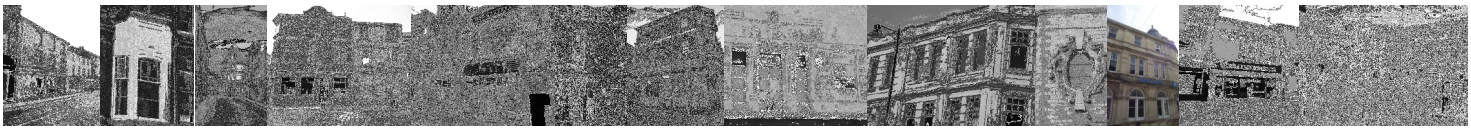
Fascias form a critical element in the streetscape. They should never dominate the rest of the shop front and should remain confined between the pilasters, above the top of the window and below the cornice.

The dimensions and proportions of the fascia are a critical component of the overall character and appearance of the shop front. The fascia board should, generally, be no deeper than 400mm and should be kept below the level of upper floor windows. Wood or metal fascias are likely to be acceptable. Hand painted or individually fixed lettering in simple styles are preferable and should normally be no larger than 225mm in height. Perspex, plastic or box type signs should be avoided. Internally illuminated signage is unacceptable. Retractable blinds and canopies built into the fascia box, without lettering, should be encouraged and should be a minimum of 2.1 metres high.

Lighting should not project significantly and should be discrete and fully integrated with the overall design of the shop front.

The use of contemporary designs and over dominant signage do not sit comfortably within the heritage setting of the Conservation Area.

Fascia should not be too large, using inappropriate materials as this Market Street example shows.



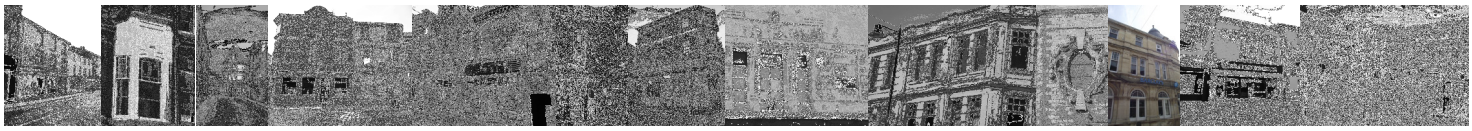
Large Fascia cuts across first floor windows and architectural details

Well proportioned fascia enhances existing architectural detail

Projecting signs

Traditional projecting signs were hung from visually discrete brackets without illumination. Where they are well designed and predominately pictorial, they can enliven the street scene. Modern internally illuminated plastic signs generally detract from the streetscape and are unlikely to be acceptable.

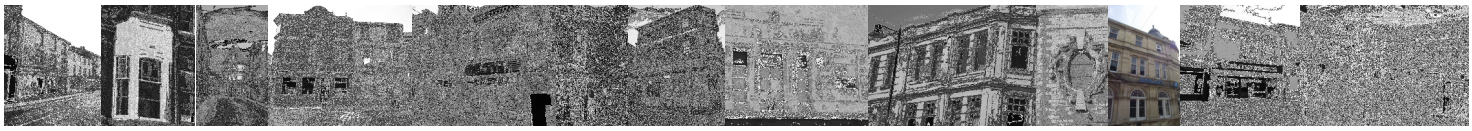
A hanging sign can add to the variety and interest of the streetscape, with symbols and well designed shapes providing a more subtle and effective way of utilising projecting or hanging signs.



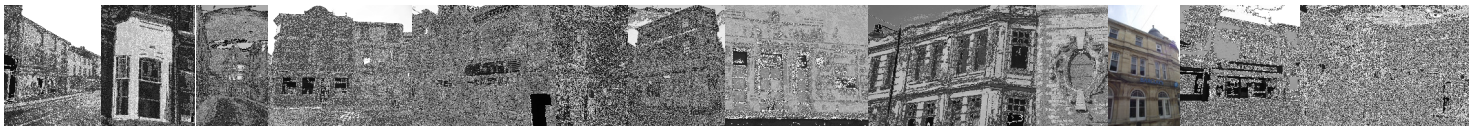
Security and shutters

Roller shutter security screens can have a very significant impact on both the shop front and street scene as a whole. External steel roller shutters should be avoided and bulky shutter boxes attached to the building frontage should not be used. Alternatives include the use of toughened glass and/or internal metal lattice grilles. Recessed doorways can be secured with wrought iron or steel gates. Such methods should be used whenever possible and external shutters should be seen as a last resort. Where essential, roller shutters which are built into the actual fascia, predominantly of the open mesh type and do not extend below the top element of the stallriser, would represent the only acceptable designs.

Examples within the Conservation Area where bulky shutter boxes project beyond the plane of the building frontage and metal shutters create a forbidding and blank face to the building.



Shop Fronts Summary
• Shop fronts should form a balanced composition and include all the traditional elements of stallrisers, pilasters, consoles and fascias with the fascia being framed by the consoles; • Shop fronts should be built from traditional materials, of traditional proportions and painted in traditional colours; • Original elements should be retained whenever possible and when replaced the replacements should be visually identical; • Fascias should be not more then 400mm deep and signage should be either hand painted or formed from individual letters. Fascias should sit between the consoles and not extend beyond them; • Canopies and external lighting may be acceptable as long as they are integrated into the design of the Fascia; • Internally illuminated signage or plastic fascias are unlikely to be acceptable; • Un-illuminated projecting signs may be acceptable as long as they are integrated into the shop front design as a whole. Internally illuminated projecting signs are unlikely to be acceptable; and • External roller shutters are unlikely to be acceptable and toughened glass or internal grills are recommended.



2.5 Upper Storeys

Introduction

There are a wide variety of elevational treatments to buildings within the PTCCA, as shown in the photographs throughout this Document. Although there is a degree of consistency on buildings of a similar period, the most notable feature throughout the Conservation Area is the variety of scale, form, materials, fenestration and architectural details. These create a critical component in the overall character of the streetscape.

Strong colours on render should be avoided and pebble-dash render should not be used in the Conservation Area.

Windows and glazing

Window openings of traditional properties are vertical in proportion and emphasis and usually asymmetric. Changes to the proportions of window openings, reveals and/or windows themselves invariably have a detrimental impact on the building facade as a whole. The double hung sliding sash window is typical of the majority of buildings that were built before the early 20th Century. Side or top hung casements are generally only characteristic of buildings of more recent development.

Original sash windows should always be retained and repaired. Replacement is rarely necessary. Decay is usually focussed on the lower parts of the window where new timber can be spliced in. The original crown or cylinder glass is thinner and more uneven in surface than modern float glass, giving more subtle reflections and where it has survived it should always be retained. Heavier modern glass is likely to require heavier sash weights to counter-balance the window.

Where the window has to be replaced, rather than repaired, the new window should be in timber and an exact match of the original. Where the original window has already been replaced by either; a modern timber casement window or a Upvc window then the re instatement of a sliding sash window of traditional design is recommended. The reinstatement of traditional vertically proportioned window openings in buildings where these have been altered is also encouraged.

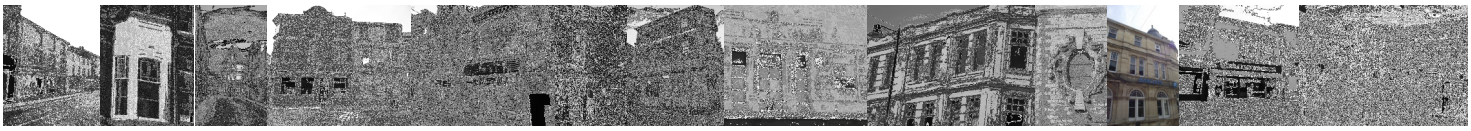
Proposals which seek to alter the proportions of traditional window openings are unlikely to be acceptable.

First floor oriel windows were common in Pontypool in the late 19th Century and should be retained whenever possible. Where there is evidence that a building once had such a window which was removed, its re-instatement is to be encouraged.

Original stone cills should be retained wherever possible. If the stone cill is damaged beyond repair a reclaimed stone cill to match is the best alternative, or a concrete cill to the same proportions.

Changes to the proportions and size of window openings has a major impact on the balance of the building, particularly in a terrace where it is the repetition and uniformity of the elevational treatment which gives it its character.

Oriel windows were a feature of the later Victorian buildings in Pontypool and they added variety to the streetscape. Where they occur in terraces it is particularly important to retain and maintain them to protect the completeness of the row.



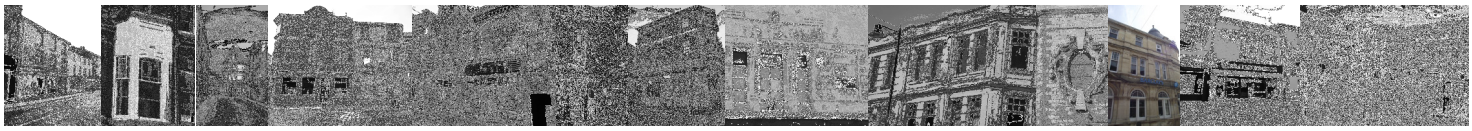
The combination of changes to the window openings, the window materials and design has a cumulative effect in diluting the qualities of heritage buildings. Windows without sub-division change the balance of proportions and inter-relationship between the window and the building as a whole.

Paintwork

Stucco and render have always been painted and the use of light, muted tones and natural colours create a more successful streetscape. Traditionally brick, stone and tiling were rarely painted and it should not be encouraged. Timber joinery was painted in strong dark colours and vivid colours should be avoided.

Ironwork should be painted in black, dark green or deep colours. In general, a limited range of colours will be more successful and result in a more coordinated and subtle overall appearance.

Darker colours should generally be avoided for painted render.



Fixtures, Cables And Satellite Dishes

Aerials, lighting, satellite dishes and electrical fixtures all contribute to diminish the uncluttered qualities of the traditional building forms in Pontypool. Satellite dishes in a street scene can have a dominant impact on the character of the area. Cables and other fixtures on the exterior of the building need to be avoided where possible and at least carefully located and fixed.

Electrical boxes, cables, satellite dishes, alarm boxes and other fixtures attached to buildings, should be avoided wherever possible. If essential they should be carefully sited to minimise their visual impact and avoid any damage to the structure or materials of the building. The larger items should be placed to the side or rear of the building and away from the principal façade.

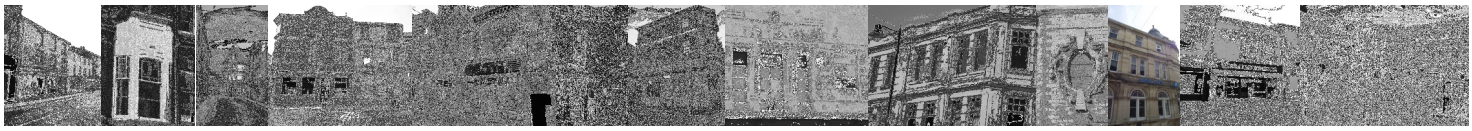
2.6 Roofs

Roof Coverings

The majority of roofs in Pontypool are constructed from Welsh Slate, which should always be used for repair. The size of the slates selected for repair should match the existing ones as closely as possible. Ridge tiles and similar details should be bedded in lime putty rather the Portland Cement.

Replacement roofs should be in natural slate and some Spanish or Chinese Slates may be acceptable, although the colours would need careful selection. Some Canadian Slates come from the same geological beds as Welsh Slates and should be considered. Imported natural slates that match the grey or heather blue colour of the original Welsh Slate may be acceptable but it is important to source the slates from a reputable quarry to avoid long term problems of the slates weathering. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish artificial slate from natural slate. New but artificial slate weathers in a different way to natural slate over time and thus its appearance will significantly differ.

Cement tiles are normally unacceptable on traditional buildings and only sometimes appropriate on modern buildings. Apart from the detrimental visual impact of the much ‘coarser’ appearance, they can also weigh significantly more than the original slate materials with resultant problems to the underlying roof structure. Where an existing



roof has in the past been covered in concrete tiles or other material, it should revert to the natural slate when replacement is required.

Decorative clay ridge tiles should normally be used with a scrolled finial at the end of gable roofs, where there is no chimney. High quality buildings benefit from a lead ridge. Hipped roofs of the Victorian and Edwardian era were generally of traditional lead roll type and bulkier tiles should be avoided.

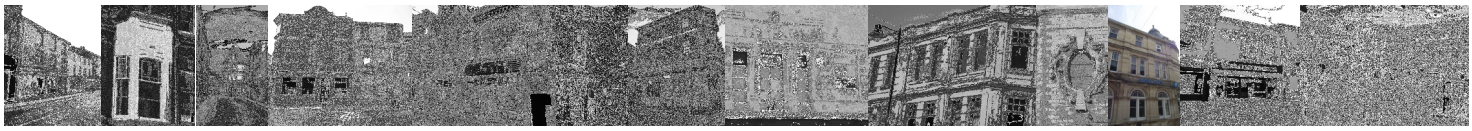
Roof forms are typically shallow pitched in slate and the importance of a consistent type of slate can be appreciated. The occasional chimney stack (without pots) demonstrates the blank appearance of the roofs where they have been removed.

Bargeboards, Fascias and Soffits

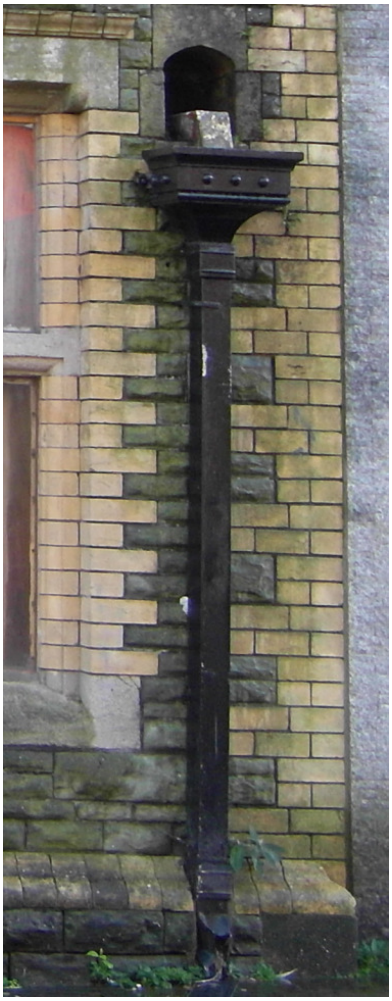
Bargeboards, fascias and soffits are generally plain and should be constructed of painted softwood. Their replacement by Upvc is unlikely to be acceptable. Where more detailed designs exist they should be retained.

Painted finishes on bargeboards, fascias and soffits should respond to the material and colour of the elevations. Usually white is more visually pleasing as a contract to stone, brick, or darker rendered finishes, whilst black is preferable as a contrast to lighter finishes, but other colours can be acceptable if chosen carefully.

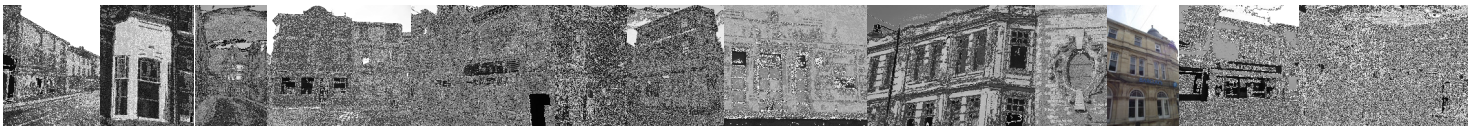
Exposed bargeboards on the flanks of buildings form an important part of the protection.

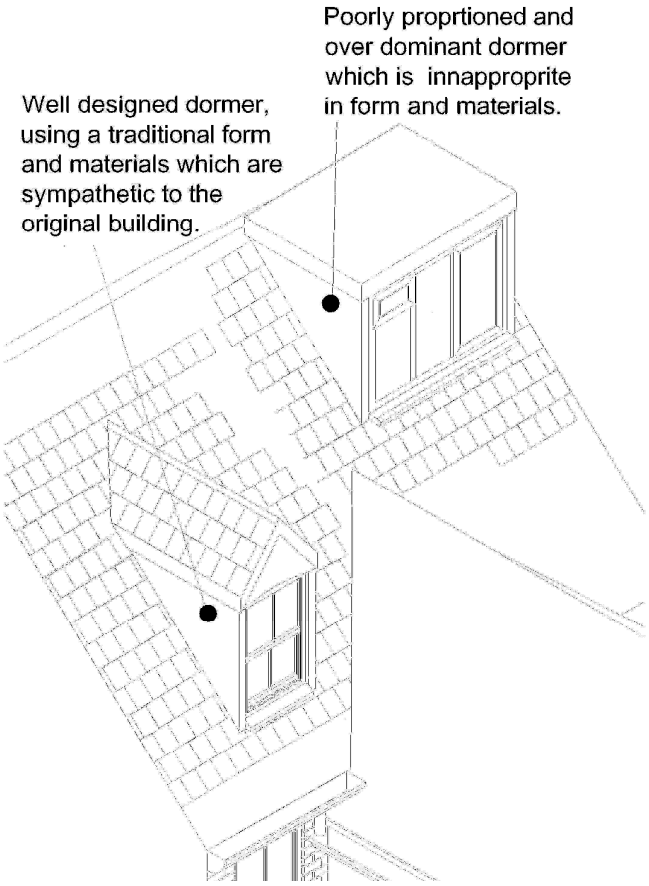


Guttering and downpipes



Guttering and downpipes on traditional buildings should be either cast iron or aluminium. The use of cast iron for downpipes is recommended on maintenance grounds, as aluminium can easily be damaged. Half-round and ogee pattern gutters are suitable for most buildings with a more elaborate or deeper profile appropriate on 'grander' properties. Further advice on individual guttering or drainpipes, such as appropriate replacement options, can be obtained from the Officers listed in section 3.5. Plastic rainwater goods are unlikely to be acceptable as they are more prone to deforming and general weaknesses at the joints, which can cause water leaking onto the building with consequent damage. Guttering should always be painted black and replicate the original design whenever possible.



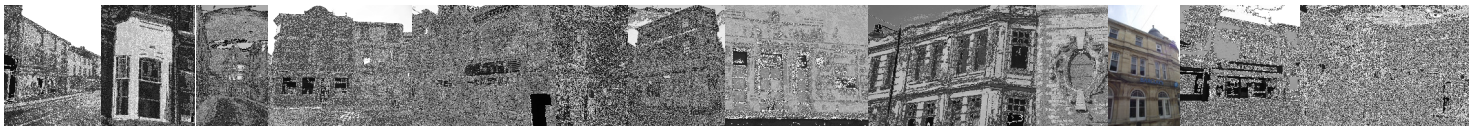


2.7 Roof lights and dormers

Roof lights are not a traditional feature and their use on principal elevations is unlikely to be acceptable. When required, the use of conservation roof lights on return or rear elevations is advised. These should be of traditional proportions with a vertical glazing bar and be set as low as possible in the plane of the roof.

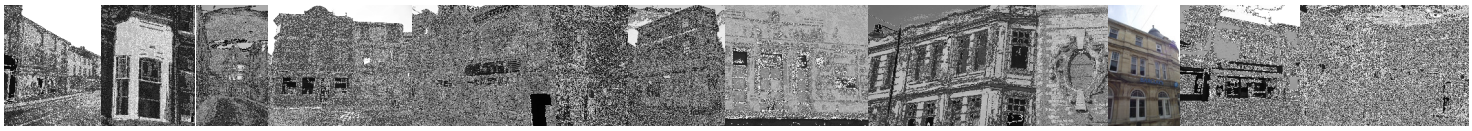
Where dormers occur in Pontypool they usually form an integrated element of the original architectural design of the principal elevation. Dormers that result from the later conversion of the roof space are unlikely to achieve this integrated appearance and may have a detrimental impact upon the streetscape and are therefore, unlikely to be acceptable on principal elevations. Dormers to rear elevations which can be seen from the public realm (especially from Pontypool Park) may be acceptable as long as they do not dominate either the roof or the main building, have a pitched roof and are designed to traditional proportions with appropriate detailing.

Dormers can provide variety and interest to the roofline and the opportunity for attic rooms where the roof pitch is steep enough.



Upper Storeys and Roofs Summary

- Original sash windows should be retained whenever possible;
- Replacement windows should be timber sash windows on all elevations visible by the general public;
- Openings should retain their vertical emphasis;
- Oriel windows should be retained whenever possible and their reinstatement is encouraged;
- Stucco and render should be painted in light, traditional colours;
- Satellite dishes, alarm boxes and similar fixings should not appear on the principle elevation;
- Replacement roofs should be natural slate. Although Welsh Slate is preferred, other slates e.g. Canadian may be acceptable;
- Roof lights and dormers are unlikely to be acceptable on principle elevations unless they form part of a unified design and they should be installed on rear roofs;
- Where dormers are essential, they should conform to traditional proportions and have pitched roofs. They should not dominate the roof or be above the original roof height;
- Bargeboards should be wood and painted in traditional colours that compliment the colours on the rest of the building; and
- Guttering should be either cast iron or aluminium. Plastic guttering is unlikely to be acceptable.



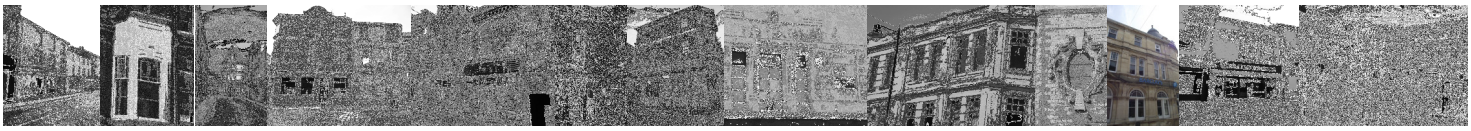
2.8 Boundary Walls And Railings

In areas where the building line is set back from the pavement, the boundary walls and railings are particularly important in their contribution to the overall character and quality of the street scene. With the exception of the domestic properties along St. James Field and lengths of Hanbury Road, the majority of properties in the Conservation Area are tight against the pavement and lack any form of front boundary treatment.

Replacement walls should be constructed in stone except where existing brick walls prevail (e.g. St James' Field) and replacement brick walls should be built with a traditional bond. The use of locally salvaged stone is preferable though imported or reconstituted stone to match the colour, tone and texture of traditional stone can be used. Rear boundary walls should be designed and constructed based on the information above but they should be constructed to a higher height in order to provide the required level of security and should usually be constructed without iron railings or the use of razor wire etc.

There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of boundary walls within the Conservation Area due to the impact that their removal could have on the character of the Conservation Area. However, there needs to be a balance between the requirement for highway access and the impact the removal of a boundary wall would have on the character of a Conservation Area. Thus a proposal which complies with highway safety requirements may be refused due to the impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

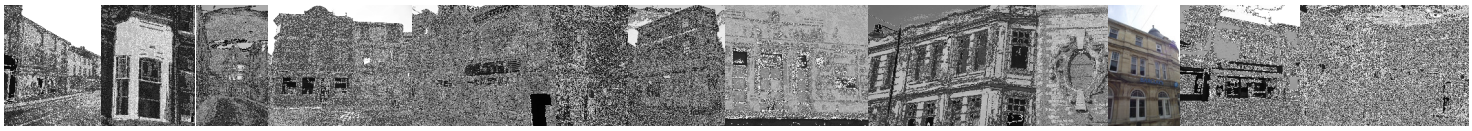
Brick boundary walls form an important component in the streetscape along St James' Fields. Any repairs and replacements should be in the same colour brick and removal to create parking space will need to be considered against the impact on the character of the Conservation Area and highway safety requirements.



Stone walls, particularly important on Hanbury Road, should be retained and any repairs carried out in the same material. Hedges and timber fences do not provide the same quality of enclosure.

The replacement of the traditional stone wall detracts from the heritage qualities of Hanbury Road. Mixing stone, brick and the use of concrete is not appropriate.

Cast or wrought iron railings and gates are an attractive complement to the stone walling as seen on the boundary to the Italian Gardens.



2.9 Design Principles For New Buildings & Extensions

Introduction

New development within the Conservation Area should be sympathetic to its historic context and should be regarded as an opportunity to reinforce those positive characteristics of the PTCCA that have been identified in the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal. The construction and design of any new building within the Conservation Area should be based on sound principles of urban design within a heritage context and respect the unique qualities of the Conservation Area. Whilst the specific issues that affect the development at differing scales will vary, the core principles that underpin an appropriate design response for any specific site are common to most forms of development, both large and small.

There are two possible approaches that can be applied to the design of new buildings. The first is pastiche which seeks to replicate the building forms of the past. The closer that this replicates the essential characteristics of an area, the more successful this approach is likely to be. The second approach to the design of buildings is a contemporary/modern approach. Often the charm of historic towns is due to the mixture of buildings reflecting various periods of our history and this is a continuing process. It follows that exceptionally well designed buildings that respect their context and are clearly of our own time, have the potential to enhance the experience of PTCCA.

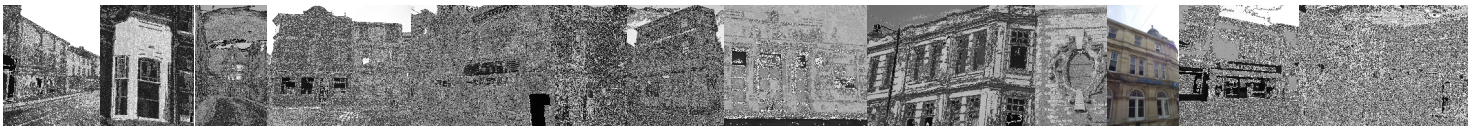
Examples of unsuccessful new designs – a pastiche approach with inaccurate proportions and details and a contemporary building which disregards scale, elevational treatment & materials while facing the entrance to the Conservation Area.

A pastiche attempt to regenerate Clarence Street failed to respect the traditional forms and proportions and with some poor materials, has resulted in an inappropriate streetscape.

Successful urban design is the art of making places. High quality streets, spaces and towns tend to have characteristics in common. The Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment (CABE) document, Building in Context: New Development in Historic Areas (CABE 2001), identifies useful guidelines as to what constitutes good new design in Conservation Areas.

- New development should relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land and should be based on a careful evaluation of the site;
- New buildings or extensions should respect the immediate context and the pattern of existing developments and routes;
- Important views and vistas should be respected;
- The materials and building techniques used should be as high quality as those used in the existing buildings;
- New buildings should not impinge on any significant open spaces or necessitate the destruction of buildings that contribute to the character or appearance of the place; and
- The scale of neighbouring buildings should be respected.

This Document builds on these core principles, which are applicable to all forms of development within the Conservation Area. Well designed contemporary buildings can be incorporated within the Conservation Area. The broader urban design principles outlined above should apply. Any contemporary design approach needs to respond to and be based on, an understanding of the historic context. Individual designs will need to demonstrate the design rationale that has led to the proposed solution and the manner in which the historic context has been acknowledged.



Examples of inappropriate new development which fail to respect the traditional forms, detailing or materials of their heritage context. Buildings with flat roofs and poor elevational treatments are also detrimental to the character of the street scene and are unlikely to fit into the Conservation Area townscape.

Site Analysis and Appraisal

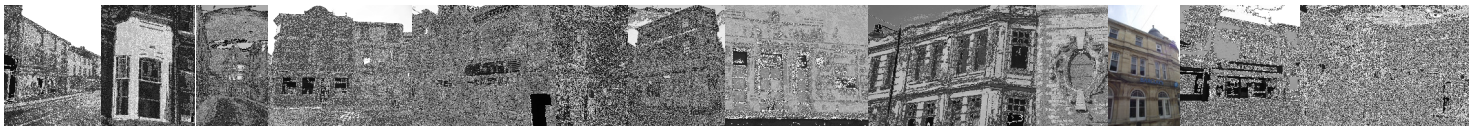
The starting point for any proposal for new development needs to be a thorough understanding of the context and setting of the site and its surroundings, including

- The local character and distinctiveness of the area;
- The materials, forms and features of existing development; and
- The topography, land form and orientation of the site and its surroundings.

New development should enrich the qualities of existing urban places.

To understand the opportunities and constraints of the site and its immediate surroundings, it is necessary to consider the following:

- The history of the site and its surroundings should inform the design and basic form of the structure as well as its elevational treatment;
- Buildings and spaces should respond to their location, in respect of entrances, gateways and landmarks allowing for views and vistas into and out of the site to allow legibility and ease of movement;
- Buildings and other structures to be retained;
- Existing and potential desire lines through the site, if applicable;
- The network of vehicular and pedestrian routes around the site and potential access points for both the disabled and able-bodied;
- Opportunities for, and consideration of, views into and out of the site;
- Orientation of buildings around the site to establish building heights and lines; and



- The presence of 'hostile' edges such as noise sources or visual eyesores; the potential impacts that a new building will create overshadowing existing buildings; issues of over-looking and privacy and the impact of works on existing trees and hedgerows.

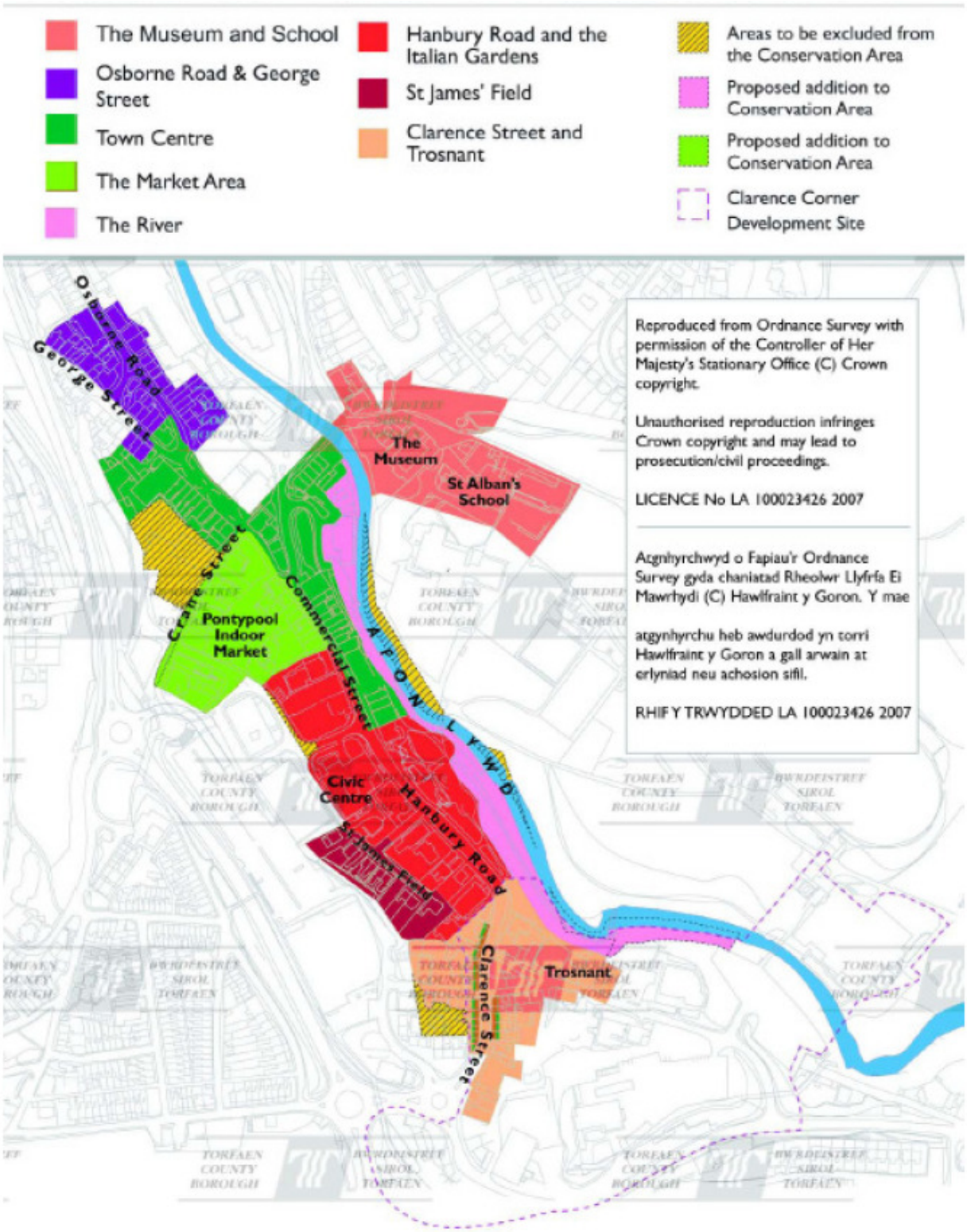
Active frontages

Any infill development or extensions to existing properties should be designed in relation to the entire street or particular group of buildings. The quality of streets, places and spaces is dependent on the characteristics of enclosure and continuity, rhythm and scale and the balance of variety and uniformity, all of which contribute to the creation of safe and attractive environments.

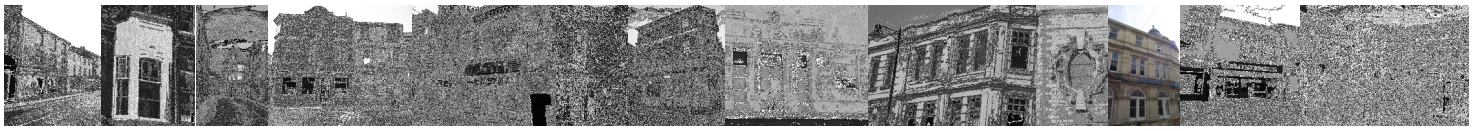
Consideration needs to be given to the effect the proposal could have on the existing street scene. Is the prevailing character and grouping of buildings terraced, semi-detached or detached? Is there a consistency and uniformity of building style and layout or is variety and irregularity an integral part of the area's character? What density of development is appropriate in relation to the prevailing character of the area?

The Conservation Area includes most of the commercial centre of Pontypool in addition to the residential buildings in St James' Field and the community buildings across the River (i.e., St Albans School, Pontypool Museum and the Salvation Army building). A number of differing character areas were identified in the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. (see map below).

The majority of historic properties are immediately adjacent to the edge of the pavement and there are very few front gardens in the Conservation Area. New developments within the Town Centre, Market Street, Hanbury Road and Osborne Road character areas should therefore follow this pattern and have a strong presence on the street with an active frontage. Such developments should either have retail use at ground level if they are located within primary retail location in accordance with Policy R6 of the Adopted Torfaen Local, or other commercial uses at ground level in other locations within the above character areas. Passive or residential frontages at ground level are unlikely to be acceptable except in the St James' Field, Trosnant and Museum Character Areas.



Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area Character Areas



Sites should ideally be built in the form of a perimeter block with any car parking hidden to the rear or centre of the site. Buildings should always have their primary facades facing out to the public realm rather then in to the private realm. If a street or group of buildings has a well defined 'building line', any new development or extension, which departs from this convention may appear incongruous with the street scene.

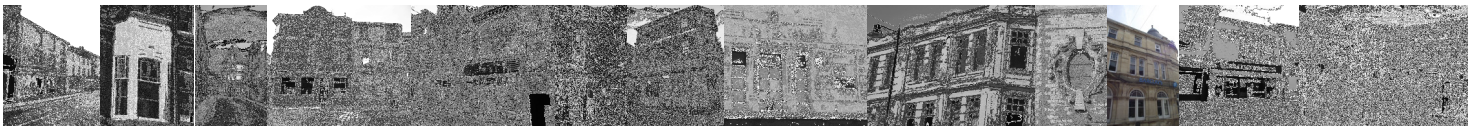
An unsuccessful attempt to visually link a wide frontage gap for servicing new development on Crane Street.

Elevational treatment

The vertical emphasis of most traditional buildings in the Conservation Area should be repeated with any new development. Larger buildings should have their elevations and massing broken up so that they do not appear out of scale or monolithic. Particular consideration needs to be given to rooflines which need to have a visual interest with variation in roof heights and visual interest. The roof should not dominate the façade but be subservient to it.

Window openings need to repeat the vertical emphasis and window and door reveals should be used to give the façade a feeling of depth and also to enhance the traditional streetscape rhythm. Well designed oriel windows at first floor level are a feature of parts of the Conservation Area.

Modern interpretations of traditional architectural details can be very effective and help a new building relate to its historic context. Examples of such detailing include window surrounds especially heads and sills, ridge details and eaves details.



The vertical rhythm of the buildings is repeated with different styles including a new building.

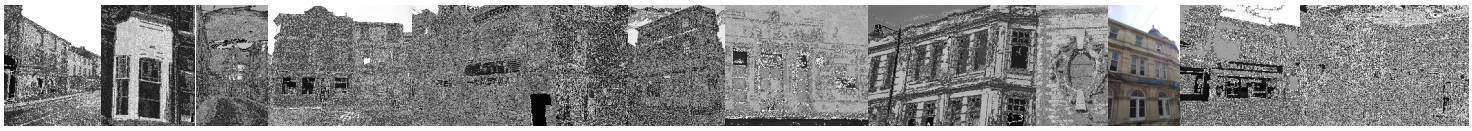
Materials

The following guidance should form the basis for designs of new development:

- Windows and doors should preferably be constructed from timber, although metal and high quality sliding sash Upvc windows (although not of a brilliant white colour) may be appropriate under some circumstances;
- On the rear of buildings, Upvc casement windows and doors which have a flat and dead appearance and are unlikely to be acceptable;
- Guttering and downpipes should be either cast iron or aluminium. Plastic rainwater goods are unlikely to be acceptable;
- Brick, stone and render walling are all appropriate, as are modern cladding systems if imaginatively used in a contemporary design of high architectural quality; and
- Roofs should be either natural or imitation slate, stone or of a lead appearance. Profiled steel systems or concrete tiles are unlikely to be acceptable.

Extensions to Existing Buildings

Extensions to buildings in the Conservation Area, which were built before 1914 usually involve a projection to the rear of the building or expansion into the roof space, as the prevailing terraced form normally inhibits the scope for side or front additions. The sloping topography of the area, combined with the road layout and rear access roads, results in rear elevations often being very visible.



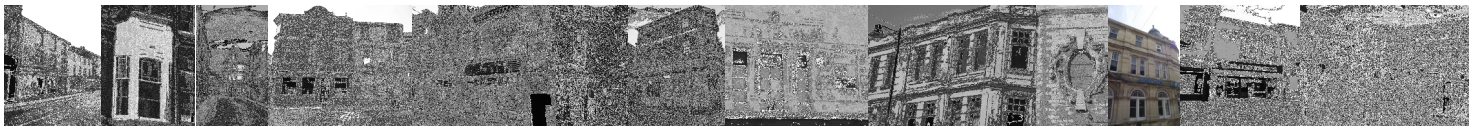
The design principles outlined below are generally recognised as representing good practice and should be applied throughout the Conservation Area to extensions to any building regardless of whether it is a traditional or more modern building. The design principles include:

- The form and massing of any extension should be sympathetic to the surrounding street scene and the character of the building it is being added to in respect of the roof form, the materials and the proportions of window openings etc;
- In general any extension to the building should be subservient to the original structure and have a lower roofline;
- The roof should have a similar pitch and should be tiled using natural slate. Monopitched roofs may be acceptable but flat roofs are only likely to be acceptable as additions to 20th Century buildings, which feature such flat roofs as part of their original design. The use of concrete slates is unlikely to be acceptable;
- Materials should match and/or be sympathetic with the existing building and the surrounding context;
- Ideally walls should be constructed out of the same material as the original. Rendered blockwork may be appropriate either when there is evidence of historic rendering on the original building, the original building is stone or as part of a high quality contemporary scheme. Where a brick extension is appropriate this should use brickwork that matches the original in both appearance of brick and brick bond;
- The shape, size and proportion of the window and door openings should match the original building and its surrounding context, in most cases these will have a vertical emphasis and be constructed in wood;
- Guttering and drainpipes should be aluminium or cast iron rather then Upvc; and
- Contemporary extensions are acceptable as long as they comply with the above principles.

Rear extensions on Osborne Road (seen from above) and Commercial Street facing the River and the northern entrance into the Conservation Area demonstrate how flat roofs with inappropriate massing which dominates the original buildings and materials which do not integrate with the more traditional forms of original buildings, give the appearance of a separate and somewhat alien mass, which has been bolted on to the building.

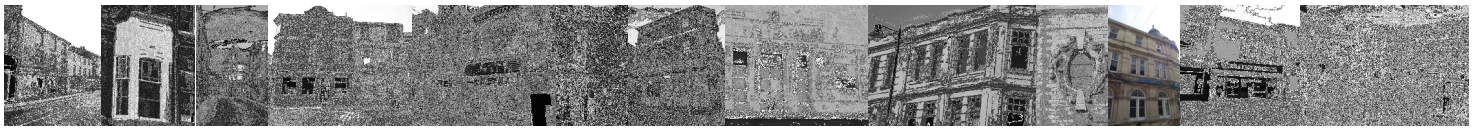
This riverside cottage demonstrates the damage that can be created by inappropriately designed extensions, which also introduce new conflicting wall and roof materials. Selection of materials is very important in any extension to an existing building. Matching in and/or being sympathetic with adjacent surfaces will help ensure a subtle transition and integration of new and old parts of the building.

The mix of extensions on the rear of historic properties on Commercial Street not only damage the form and appearance of the original buildings with poor designs and maintenance but they also create an unattractive entrance to the PTCCA on Park Road.

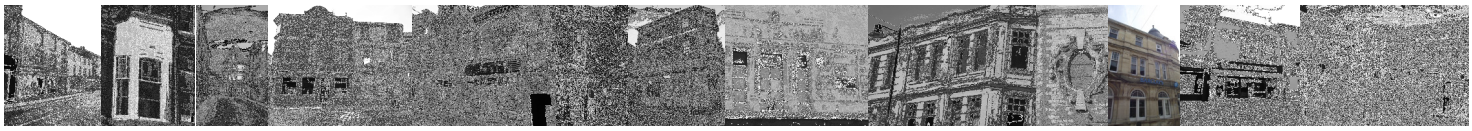


New Build and Extensions Summary

- New buildings should respect their context;
- Both pastiche and contemporary approaches are acceptable for new buildings;
- The design should be based on a good quality site appraisal, which conforms to and considers the historical context in sufficient detail;
- The principles outlined in CABE's 'Buildings In Context' project should be embedded in the design and the Design and Access Statement should detail how this has been achieved;
- Active frontages should be used whenever possible;
- Buildings should have a vertical emphasis and reflect the rhythm of the surrounding streetscape;
- Traditional building materials are recommended and poor quality modern materials such as plastic guttering, Upvc windows, concrete tiles or profiled steel roofing are unlikely to be acceptable;
- Extensions should relate to the original building and use similar materials. Window and door openings and the elevational treatment should reflect those on the original building; and
- Extensions should not dominate the original building or have a higher ridge height.



3. SUPPORT



3.1 Requirements for Planning Permission

It is the intention of TCBC to adopt this Document as SPG to the Adopted Torfaen Local Plan. Once this Document is adopted (following consultation) as SPG it will be used to inform all Planning Applications in the PTCCA. The achievement of this aim should protect the character of and benefit the economy of, the Conservation Area.

Important considerations will be the general requirements for Planning Permission (see Section 1.4 and policies listed in the Appendices) particularly for commercial properties and the additional requirements imposed by:

- The designation of the Pontypool Town Centre Conservation Area;

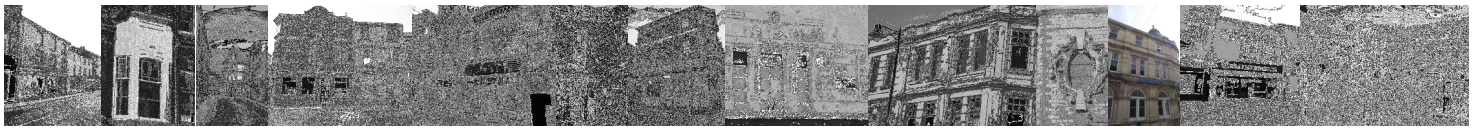
  TCBC has designated PTCCA as being of 'special architectural or historic interest' (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) and therefore, has a legal duty to 'preserve or enhance' its character and appearance. In a Conservation Area there are increased planning controls over a range of development situations from minor works and works on trees, to the need for Conservation Area Consent for any demolition.

- The Restriction of Permitted Development Rights;

  Commercial properties have very few Permitted Development Rights and almost any change requires Planning Permission. Although residential properties have a range of Permitted Development Rights, the Local Planning Authority also has the power to impose Article 4 Directions which may remove some of these Permitted Development Rights. Generally Planning Permission for all forms of change will not be granted for works that would result in a loss of architectural or heritage features or character that contribute to the special interest of the Conservation Area. This includes not only windows, doors, chimneys, rainwater goods, materials, shop fronts, satellite dishes and other architectural components, but also historic plot boundaries, spatial characteristics and key views and vistas.

- The need for Listed Building Consent;

  In addition to the possible need for Planning Permission, Listed Building Consent will be required for ANY works that affect the character or appearance of a Listed Building. This includes work to the interior as well as the exterior and to any structures within the curtiledge of the building. The range of works, which require Listed Building Consent, is therefore, extensive and



owners of Listed Buildings are encouraged to contact the Conservation Officer before beginning any such works. The reason for this is that carrying out works without the required Consent is a serious criminal act which can be tried at a Crown Court. Listed Building Applications must be referred to Cadw for consideration prior to approval by the Local Planning Authority.

- Tree Preservation Orders and works on trees within Conservation Areas;

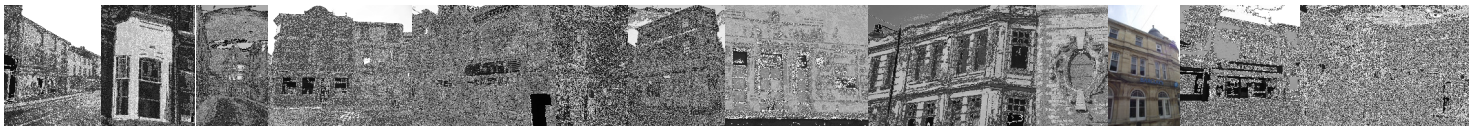
  Consent is required to undertake works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Area and if any require is required an Application should be made in writing to the Council in writing and should state the reasons for making the application, identifying the trees to which the application relates (by plan if necessary) and specifying the operations to be carried out. If it is necessary to undertake work on or cut down a tree within a Conservation Area, which are not covered by a Tree Preservation Order, then under Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Council should be given 6 weeks prior notice (a Section 211 Notice) which clearly sets out what work is proposed. Before carrying works out you should ask the Local Planning Authority for advice on whether a tree is within a Conservation Area or whether it is protected separately under a Tree Preservation Order.

- The need for Advertisement Consent;

  New and replacement advertisements and signage usually require Advertisement Consent and should respect their area in terms of visual and neighbour amenity and public and highway safety. If you are unsure whether Consent is required, you should contact Development Control Officers before erecting any signage.

  The Design Guidance proposed in this Document is to protect and enhance the historic character and environmental qualities of the Conservation Area. The purpose of this Design Guide is to emphasise the importance of the quality of design e.g. form and materials, the need to respect the setting and the need for adequate maintenance.

  To achieve these aims, building and landowners considering development or changes to their buildings are encouraged to seek Pre-application Advice by discussing proposals with the Council's Development Control Service before submitting any Application. The reason for this is so that any specific issues or requirements can be addressed before an Advertisement



Consent Application is submitted. It is also recommended that, prior to the submission of any proposals; discussions should be held with Building Control Officers regarding requirements for Building Regulations Approval.

Further points of advice such as supporting information and Council contacts are listed in section 3.5.

3.2 Design Process Checklist

To achieve the aims of this Document, any building owner, landowner or developer should follow the steps of a design process that is appropriate for the scale and type of change being proposed. In general, a design process checklist could include the steps identified on the flow chart shown below.

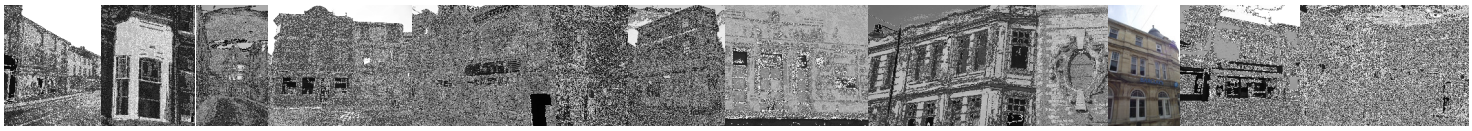
Submitting a Planning Application will involve the preparation of five copies of the following items:

- Correct Application Forms;
- A Design and Access Statement;
- Existing and proposed layout drawings;
- Existing and proposed elevation drawings; at 1:100 or 1:50;
- A site location plan at 1:1250 or 1:2500 with site area edged in red;
- A blockplan at 1:200 or 1:500;
- Site photographs where appropriate;
- Cross section drawings where a site includes any significant change in level;
- Where appropriate, an application for Listed Building Consent;
- In certain locations, ecological surveys and archaeological evaluations are required; and
- Detail drawings, such as window sections at 1:2 or 1:5 may be required.

This is not an exhaustive list and the full requirements should be checked with a Development Control Officer prior to submission.

What a Design and Access Statement Should Include:

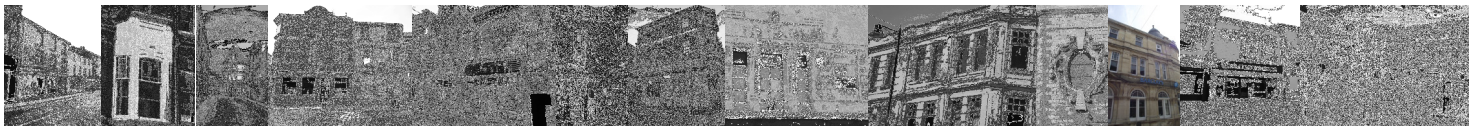
The Statement should cover both the design principles and concepts that have been applied to the proposed development and how issues relating to access to the development have been thought through. Furthermore, the Statement will need to explain and justify the following where appropriate:



- The amount of development;
- The layout of the proposed development in terms of the relationship between buildings and private and public spaces within and around the site;
- The scale of the building including why particular heights have been settled on and how these relate to the site's surroundings and the relevant skyline;
- The proposed landscaping scheme, including its purpose within the development and its relationship to the surrounding area;
- The appearance of the development and how this will relate to the appearance and character of the development's surroundings, particularly the choice of materials, surface treatments, paving and lighting;
- The chosen access arrangements to ensure that all users will have equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network including the disabled, access for emergency services and any necessary crime prevention measures; and
- For Listed and Locally Listed Buildings a Statement of Significance will also be required, in accordance with Cadw's 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance' (draft July 2009), to identify the building's key architectural features and historic merit.

Further steps following the preparation of detail construction designs will involve a Building Regulation Application with assistance from Building Control Officers.

The key to this design process is the opportunity for discussion with Development Control Officers at an early stage to ensure the implications of development in the proposed location are fully understood. The level of pre-application advice given will vary according to the scale of the proposal and the sensitivity of the site. Further points of advice are listed below – supporting information and Council contacts in section 3.4.

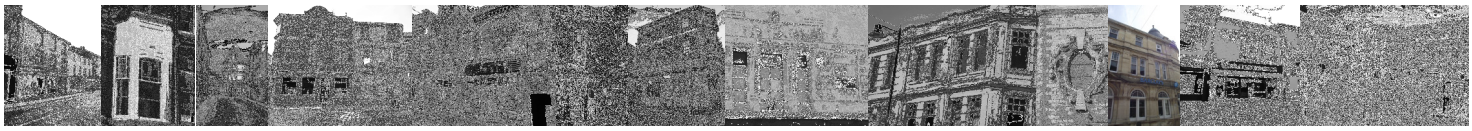


Involvement in the Planning Application Process

	Developer/ Owner	Agents	Torfaen CBC
The Inception Phase The decision to proceed with the development either for alterations to a building or a new development.	X		
Consultation Preliminary discussions with Torfaen Officers, usually led by Development Control, on the principle of the development, and the sensitivity of the area.	X		X
Engagement of Agents Appointment of the development design team, Architects, etc.	X	X	
Policy Review Consultation of policies and advisory documentation.		X	
Building and/or site analysis Detailed assessment of the building/site and surrounding context and constraints.	X	X	
Design Concepts Preliminary ideas for development designs to be discussed with Development Control Officers.	X	X	X
Design Codes Check implications of relevant design and building regulation codes. Development Control Officers can advise on selection.		X	X
Submitting a Planning Application Appropriate plans and supporting information as advised by the Development Control Officer will be submitted to the Council together with the relevant application form and fee (see list following).	X	X	X
Design approval of the application Will be considered by Planning Committee, with consideration from Cadw for Listed Buildings.	X	X	X

↓

Commence development / Challenge decision



3.3 Supporting information

The following documents provide useful guidance during the preparation of any development proposals within the Conservation Area:

Local Planning Policies

- Adopted Torfaen Local Plan (TCBC July 2000); and
- Adopted Gwent Structure Plan (Gwent County Council March 1996).

Background Information

- Pontypool Town Centre Regeneration Strategy 2008;
- Draft Pontypool Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2010; and
- Public Realm Design In The Heads Of The Valleys 2008.

National Planning Policies:

- Planning Policy Wales (Welsh Assembly Government, 2010);
- Historic Built Environment. Circular 1/98;
- Technical Advice Note 12: Design (WAG June 2009);
- Technical Advice Note 22: Planning for Sustainable Buildings (WAG June 2010);
- Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 and Circular 61/96; and
- Historic Built Environment Circular 1/98.

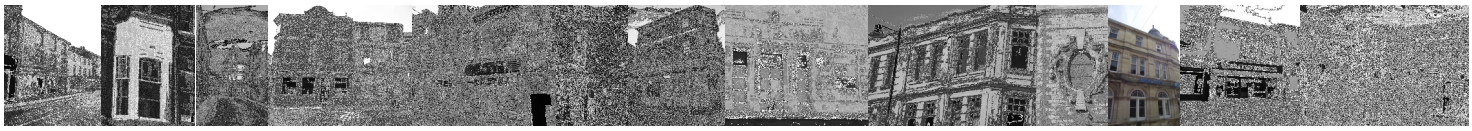
Conservation, repairs and maintenance guidance:

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance (English Heritage, 2008);

http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/professional/advice/conservation-principles/ConservationPrinciples/

Stitch in Time. Institute of Historic Building Conservation/SPAB, 2002; http://www.ihbc.org.uk/stitch_in_time.htm

Maintain Your Building website. Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, 2008; http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk/main/ and



My Valleys House website, Valleys Built Heritage Project, 2006. ***www.myvalleyshouse.org.uk***

This Design Guide for development within the Conservation Area has been prepared to provide general guidance for the future protection of the built heritage and a basis for appropriate changes to buildings and designs for new development.

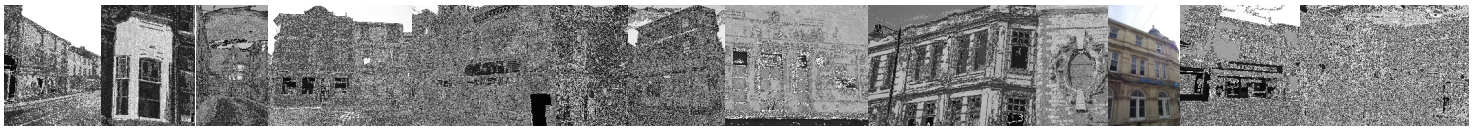
Further guidance can be provided from the use of historic photographs. Where these are available, they may be able to demonstrate how application buildings used to appear with their heritage detailing. The Pontypool Museum (Telephone Number: 01495 752036), Pontypool Library (Telephone Number: 01495 766160) and the County Records Office (Telephone Number: 01633 644888) hold a range of books, maps and individual photographs of many buildings and sites in the PTCCA.

3.4 Contacts

Officers of TCBC are ready to advise you on all development proposals within the Conservation Area. Whether you are considering a limited change, i.e. replacing windows, or proposing new building, it will be necessary to be advised on potential actions and pre application advice is recommended.

Please contact:

Development Control
Planning & Public Protection Torfaen County Borough,
Council Floor 4,
County Hall,
Cwmbran,
Torfaen,
NP44 2WN.
Telephone: 01633 648009
Fax: 01633 648017
Email: planning@torfaen.gov.uk



Financial support for improvements to commercial properties may be available from TCBC or other public sector organisations. For guidance on whether your property is eligible for financial assistance please contact:

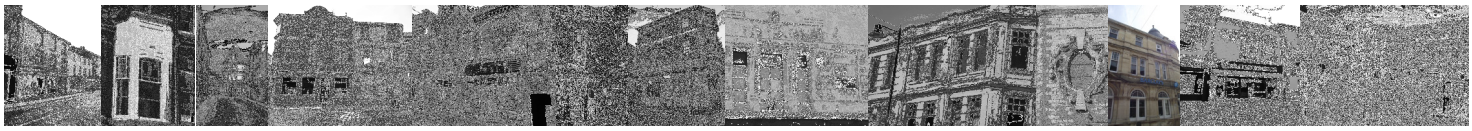
Pontypool Regeneration Team
Torfaen County Borough Council,
Civic Centre,
Pontypool,
Torfaen,
NP4 6YB.
Telephone: 01495 766297
Fax: 01495 766301
Email: david.evans@torfaen.gov.uk

For building maintenance and design advice please contact the Council's Conservation Officer:

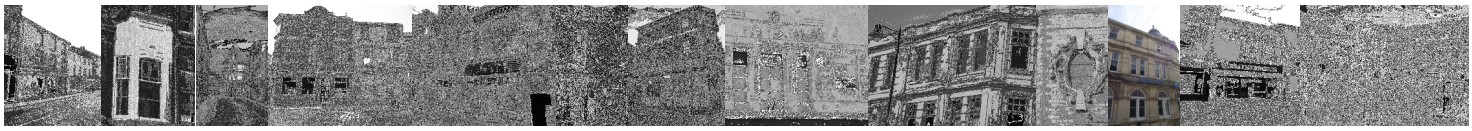
Conservation Officer
Urban Regeneration,
Torfaen County Borough Council,
Floor 3,
County Hall,
Cwmbran,
Torfaen,
NP44 2WN
Telephone: 01633 648 288
Fax: 01633 648 223.
Email: stephen.peel@torfaen.gov.uk

Building Control

Urban Regeneration,
Torfaen County Borough Council,
Floor 3,
County Hall,
Cwmbran, Torfaen,
NP44 2WN.
Telephone: 01633 647300
Fax: 01633 648 017
Email: wayne.collier@torfaen.gov.uk

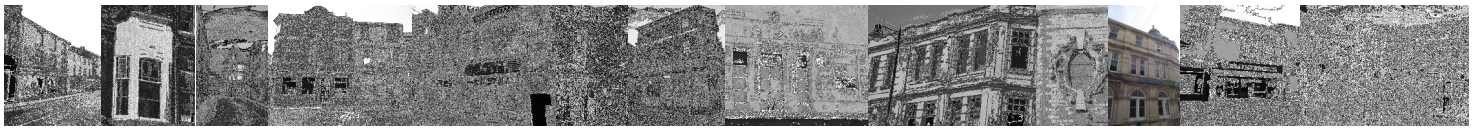


4. Appendices



Appendix 1

Maintenance Guidance and Informal Advice for Works That Do Not Require Planning Consent.



Building maintenance

Buildings in a poor state of repair have a detrimental impact on the wider area. This example shows the northern entrance to the Conservation Area looking up Park Road towards buildings on Commercial Street.

Introduction

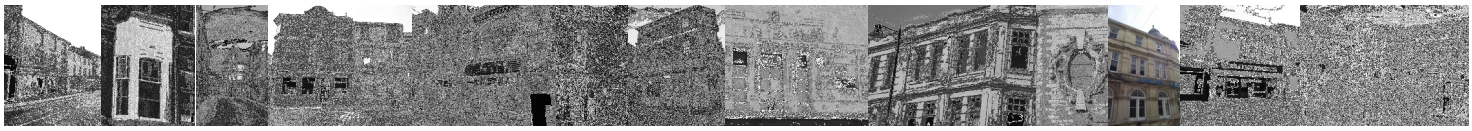
Regular maintenance of a building is the best and most economic way of conserving its fabric. Looking after a building is the responsibility of owners and occupiers. A building that is looked after will retain its value and the need for extensive repairs will be avoided. Protection from water and damp penetration is the most important issue. Roofs, gutters and down pipes should be the first to be repaired.

Owners of large buildings might consider creating a maintenance plan based on annual visual inspections and a detailed survey every five years.

Purpose

Regular maintenance should minimise the need for major repairs to all buildings. However, some elements will eventually reach the end of their life, in which case consideration will have to be given to replacement using traditional materials and proven techniques of repair. The alternative is the loss of the historic value of individual buildings and the gradual erosion of the special interest and value of the Conservation Area.

The purpose of the repair of any buildings within the Conservation Area is to prevent, or at least slow, the process of decay without damaging or altering features which contribute to its historic/ architectural importance.



Principles

The following principles of repair provide a good starting point from which to understand the approach and philosophy to historic building repair.

Minimise Intervention: Interventions must be kept to the minimum necessary to ensure long-term survival.

Avoid unnecessary damage: The authenticity of an historic building depends on the integrity of its fabric. Replacement of historic fabric, no matter how carefully done, will adversely affect the appearance of a building, reduce its value as a source of historical information and erode local distinctiveness.

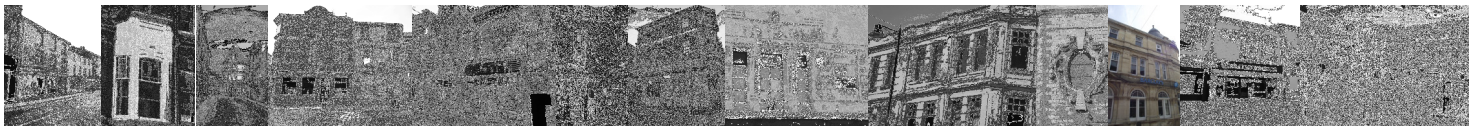
Analyse the cause of defects: To repair or replace decayed fabric without having understood why it needs replacement is to invite further problems.

Let the building 'breathe': Most modern buildings are made of hard, strong and impervious materials. They rely on physical barriers such as damp proof courses and membranes, cavity walls and cladding to exclude moisture.

Historic and traditional buildings are quite different. Many have solid walls and most have a porous fabric that absorbs moisture which then needs to evaporate i.e. to 'breathe'. To repair such buildings with hard, impervious materials will cause damage to fabric which may have survived for hundreds of years.

It is particularly important that only high quality materials are used. Cheap, modern materials such as plastic might be perceived to offer advantages in the short term, but the long term future of the character and appearance of the area will be compromised. Traditional materials which will 'weather' into their setting are required.

The extent of repair, reinstatement and improvement works required to a property should always be assessed within the context of the whole building and not on a vertical unit or shop front basis.



Day to day maintenance

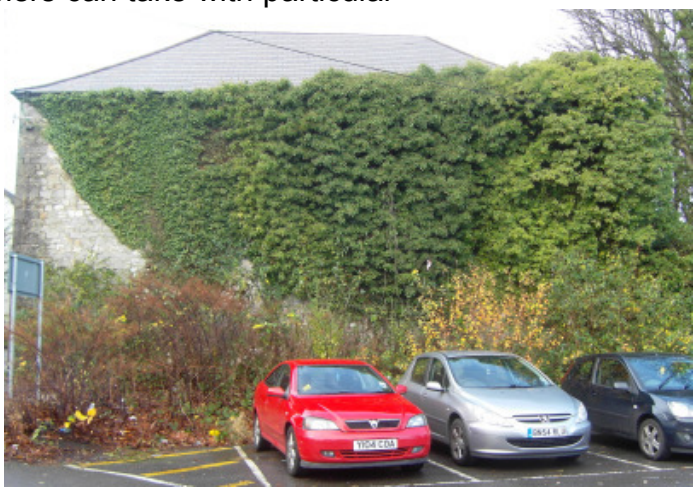
Many properties within the Conservation Area would benefit from some repair, replacement and improvement.

Building owners and occupiers should ensure that the following tasks are carried out on a regular basis.

Clearing leaves especially after the autumn, is probably the single most important task that owners and occupiers can take with particular focus on gullies and rainwater goods. A period of heavy rainfall is the best time to identify faults.

Controlling plant growth which can accelerate decay and sometimes cause structural damage. Ivy should be killed by cutting near the ground and allowing it to wither before attempting to remove its roots from the wall.

Removing bird droppings which contain damaging salts. However, there are health and safety issues involved and large deposits should be removed by a specialist firm.

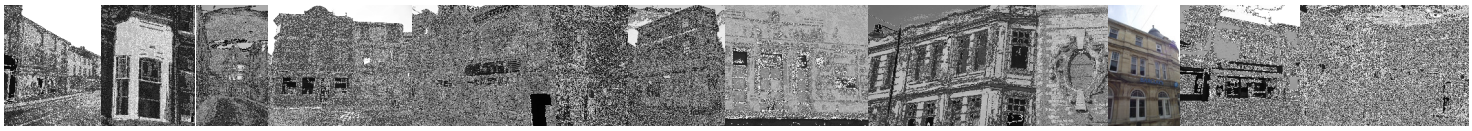


A historic building in Trosnant probably being damaged by the rampant ivy.

Looking for insect attack *and fungal* decay both of which can be caused by damp penetration and poor ventilation.

Checking ventilation to ensure that any grilles which ventilate the spaces under floors are not blocked. Lack of ventilation may lead to conditions in which fungal decay can take hold.

Clearing snow which can accumulate in gutters and other areas, allowing moisture to bridge flashings and damp proof courses. Wooden or plastic shovels should be used.



Wall surfaces

The range of wall surfaces throughout the Conservation Area display a wide variety of treatments.

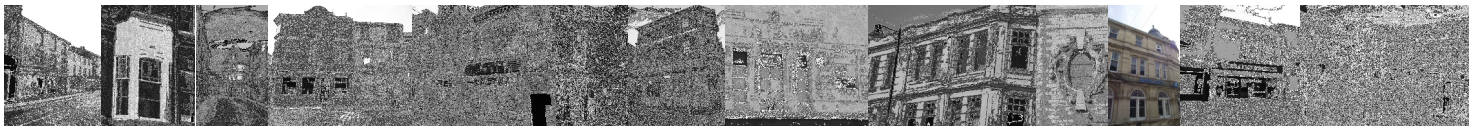
Stone is a highly durable material that should last for many years without any need for maintenance, other than perhaps isolated areas of re-pointing. This should be done by hand, with extreme care so as not to damage the edge of the stone and make sure that the pointing is brushed back or otherwise recessed back from the edge of the stone. Cement based mortars cause irreparable long-term damage to the masonry by trapping the water in and should be avoided. Natural lime mortars are more appropriate and should be in a black mortar mix. If the stone is badly soiled, simple washing with water, either by hand or with sprays is recommended.

Brick was increasingly used on the later Victorian and Edwardian properties both as the main wall surface and for edge detailing. Any repairs or immediate extensions will require careful matching of brick colour and mortar. The painting of brickwork is not acceptable and where feasible, existing examples should be removed. Only a skilled specialist contractor should carry out the cleaning of brickwork.

Smooth rendered finishes are widely used throughout the Conservation Area and should be painted in a fine textured matt finish, in shades of white, cream, grey or beige. To function correctly, the render must be no stronger than the material to which it is applied and the render mix must allow the backing masonry to ‘breathe’. A weak mix allows the render to accommodate movement and to allow moisture to evaporate freely from the wall. Hard, cement-rich mixes should not be used as their lack of flexibility will cause them to crack, allowing water to penetrate and be trapped. The eventual result is the failure of the render. Inappropriate spa render and pebble dashing has been applied to some properties, but any further use should be avoided. The removal of render is encouraged where possible, particularly on Listed Buildings.

Roofscape

The roofscape of an urban area forms the skyline and visual profile of a streetscape and is a significant part of its identity. The combination of materials, details, form and massing creates the ‘hat’, which sits above the building and is critical to its character. Although much of the detail may not always be visible from street level, the topography of Pontypool allows some views across the roofscape from parts of the Conservation Area.



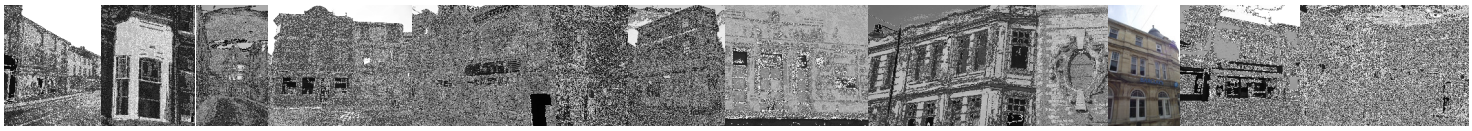
Much of the character of the original roofscape has been lost through the use of alternative materials and the loss of chimney stacks and pots. The impact of these changes can be appreciated where the significance of retained original examples can be seen. Flat roofs are not characteristic of the traditional buildings in the Conservation Area and should generally be avoided.

The roof is, by its very nature, a critical part of a buildings defence against the elements and as such, is one of the most significant focal elements for regular maintenance and repair.

If insulation is introduced into the roof it should be placed at ceiling level, or between the rafters, subject to the provision of adequate ventilation (via eaves gaps, not proprietary vents fitted to the roof slope). Insulation on top of the rafters will raise the profile of the roof causing potential problems of detailing at the eaves and where it abuts adjacent buildings. However, care is needed as the introduction of high levels of insulation into older buildings can cause condensation and consequent decay.

Most roofs in the Conservation Area have been retiled in slate, though variations of type and colour are common. The shallow slopes and low roof spaces have prevented their use for additional rooms, so rooflights and roof dormers are rare. Most chimney stacks and pots have been removed with the resultant impact on the rhythm of the streetscape.

Views from above and along the terrace on Osborne Road demonstrate that where chimney pots have been removed the roof profile loses an important part of its consistency and regularity of rhythm.



Chimney Stacks And Pots

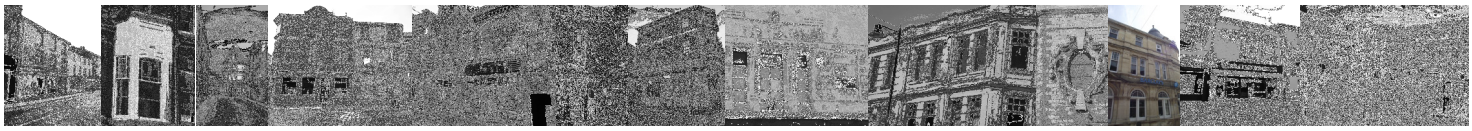
Chimney stacks play an important role within the wider streetscape by adding interest and vertical emphasis to the skyline. They should therefore, be retained whenever possible and their re instatement is encouraged.

Chimney stacks are highly vulnerable to wear and damage and it is recommended that they are checked regularly and well maintained. If there is any doubt about the condition of a chimney stack it is recommended that the advice of a competent professional, such as a structural engineer, is sought.

Whenever repair works are carried out to chimney stacks it is important that the original form and materials are retained. Should the original chimney stack be beyond repair, or already removed (but the internal breast remains), then rebuilding is an option that is encouraged.

Replacement stacks should follow the pattern of the original where this can be traced. Otherwise, they should be constructed out of suitable clay brick and not rendered. Typical detailing should include at least one over sailing corbelled course at the head. Lead flashing should be stepped in the traditional manner and not chased on a slope. Replacement chimney pots should be placed on stacks whenever possible.

The chimney stacks and pots at the Grade II listed ex-Clarence Hotel provide a very good example of how chimneys can enhance both the building and the skyline.



Energy and environment

Climate change has led to an increased awareness of the need for energy conservation and a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions which are reflected in changes in building regulations.

Sustainability is of crucial importance and needs to be considered as a primary opportunity in the design of all new buildings and extensions. In light of the holistic energy requirements to construct a new building, the retention of existing buildings and their components, as opposed to rebuilding or replacement, is in itself a sustainable solution.

There are measures that can be used within an existing building to improve energy efficiency which do not conflict with any conservation strategies or issues. These include:

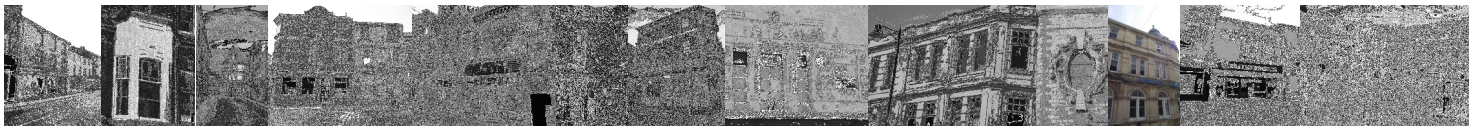
- Improved efficiency of heating systems and boilers;
- Better control of lighting and heating;
- Use of low-energy light bulbs;
- Regular maintenance of boilers and services infrastructure to maintain efficiency;
- Additional insulation in roof spaces and walls;
- Draught exclusion, whilst retaining the need for buildings to 'breathe'; and
- Generally buildings should make the most of solar gain and have a high thermal mass.

Wherever possible, all commercial buildings should make maximum use of natural lighting and passive ventilation in order to minimize the use of artificial lighting and ventilation systems.

Upvc windows as a petro-chemical product can be considered unsustainable. In addition the thermal properties of such windows are lower than a well designed timber window and their use should be discouraged on sustainability grounds as well as conservation requirements.

Natural products such as lime mortar, plasters and paints are significantly more sustainable then their modern counterparts and their use are encouraged on both historic and newer buildings.

The incorporation of renewable energy products such as solar panels can also be considered and need not adversely affect a building's character or PTCCA, if located on rear roofs and where they are less visually prominent. Wind turbines are less easy to disguise and may not be acceptable in prominent locations within the Conservation Area.



Landscaping and trees can have a significant role to play in creating a sustainable environment - broad leafed trees are particularly effective at capturing carbon and providing shade and their use is encouraged. Trees can also be used to provide shelter from both wind and sun and can create a microclimate within their foliage. Trees also have a significant role to play in increasing biodiversity.

The use and training of local contractors is inherently sustainable by both cutting fuel usage and by improving the skills of the local workforce. This can help to make the Town Centre more economically viable and intrinsically sustainable.

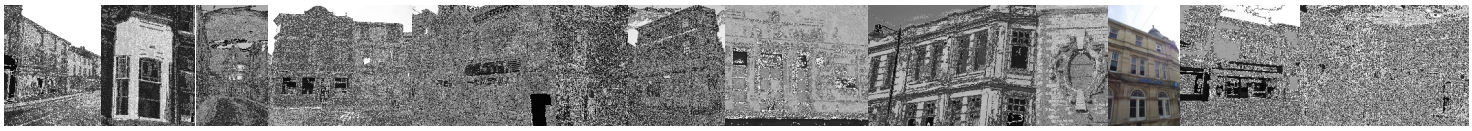
Reference should be made to TAN 22 Sustainable Buildings and PPW 2010 for guidance on sustainable design.

Concerned about how climate change may affect older properties? What about saving energy? Visit the new English Heritage website www.climatechangeandyourhome.org.uk

Public realm and streetscape

The treatment of the spaces between the buildings is also critically important in the overall quality and character of an area, following sound principles of urban design. Specific issues to be addressed include:

- Context - An appreciation of the local setting and identity of an area coupled with a sympathetic choice of materials and details to respond to and reinforce, the local character of the place;
- Creating spaces and places - The degree of openness or enclosure of a space, together with its scale, form and massing, helps to give it a character and identity and reinforces issues of safety, security, comfort, variety and interest;
- Encouraging activity - Active frontages help promote on-street activity and vibrancy as well as providing over-looking and natural surveillance to a space or street; and

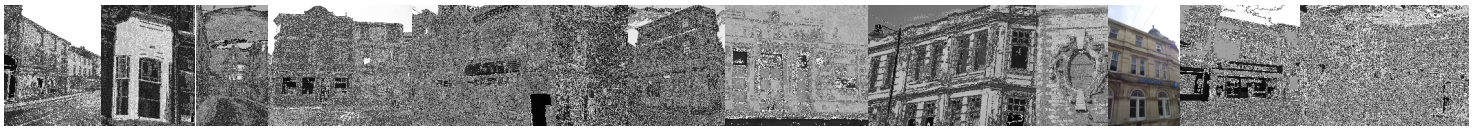


- Variety and interest - Like the buildings in a street scene, the public realm needs as much careful consideration of the balance of uniformity and variety, to create a range of opportunities and settings for a variety of users, amenities and social groups.

Recommendations are provided in the Pontypool Public Realm Strategy & Action Plan 2010.

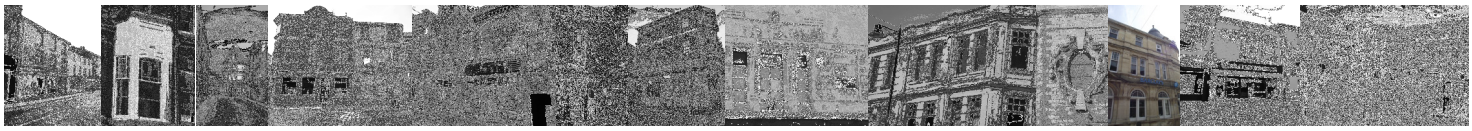
The Italian Gardens provide a dramatic setting for the Conservation Area in Pontypool Park.

A new layout for traffic movement has resulted in excessive signage.

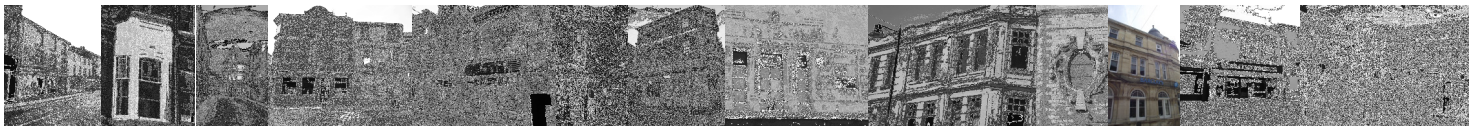


Appendix 2

Glossary



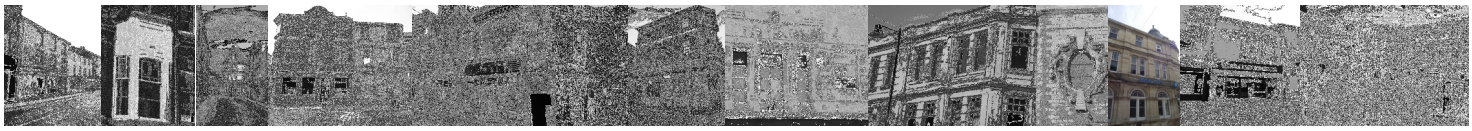
Ashlar-	Wall constructed from stone carved into straight edged and flat sided rectangular blocks of constant dimensions laid in regular courses.
Heritage Building-	Heritage buildings include all properties built before the First World War and notable buildings of architectural and group value built before the Second World War
Heritage Environment-	any part of the physical landscape that has been altered through human intervention which has cultural historic value.
Heritage Townscape-	the general appearance of the town when all the visible buildings are heritage buildings.
Portico-	A canopy above a main entrance usually supported by columns. Originated in Greek temples around 500 BC and used in Wales during and after the Classical revival of the 17th Century.
Rhythm-	a recurring pattern of windows, doors or roofs for example.
Townscape-	The general appearance of the town produced by collections of buildings of any period.



Appendix 3

Bats in Buildings

Legal Considerations



Most of the United Kingdom's bat species use built structures including old buildings, walls and bridges as well as cavities in trees and other suitable features. Always assume bats are present in such features. The only way you can be certain bats are not present is by asking a specialist to survey the property or feature for bats.

In almost all cases, changes and repairs to buildings and other features can be made in such a way that bats continue to flourish; it is usually just a question of timing, awareness and consideration.

All seventeen species of bat in the United Kingdom are protected by law. It is a criminal offence to deliberately kill, injure, disturb or capture a bat, or to damage or destroy their roosts. (Note that roosts are still protected even when bats are not physically present).

You should always contact Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) or seek expert advice before undertaking any work which may affect bats or their roosts; where bats are present you must either arrange the work in a way that will avoid committing an offence or obtain a license from CCW or Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) often referred to as a European Protected Species or EPS license.

If you do not carry out a survey and bats are discovered in the course of the works, the works are likely to be halted until a suitable scheme of work has been agreed. This may need a license. Obtaining a license to proceed may take over two months; therefore, you should always arrange the bat survey at the start of planning and building works.

Sources of further information and guidance.
Countryside Council for Wales, (www.ccw.gov.uk)
Tel: 02920 772 400
Torfaen County Borough Council, Ecology Team
Tel: 01633 648 256
Bat Conservation Trust (www.bats.org.uk)
Tel: 020 7627 2629
Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management