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**Tredegar Townscape Initiative**  
***Conservation Area Appraisal & Design Guide***

*July 2006*

***Draft Report***

**Prepared on behalf of Blaenau Gwent County Council by**  
***Capita Symonds & Capita Percy Thomas Ltd***

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

- 1.1.1 In 2005, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (BGCBC) received Physical Regeneration Funding (PRF), from the Welsh Assembly Government, to procure a specialist consultancy service to advise on the potential for a 'Tredegar Townscape Initiative'.
- 1.1.2 Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council felt there was a justified need to preserve and enhance the distinctive character and appearance of Tredegar, which has already suffered some damage by the loss of historic buildings through demolition or dereliction, insensitive shop front designs, and unsympathetic modern infill development.
- 1.1.3 To this end Capita Symonds were appointed to recommend a strategy for the Tredegar Town Centre area that will support and complement key projects already implemented in the town, and to identify a series of actions that provide a new basis for sustainable regeneration. This was to be achieved by identifying Tredegar's unique historical past and carrying out a Conservation Area based appraisal and a complementary Design Guide. It is the intention to use these mechanisms to allow the opportunities offered by the townscape to provide economic and social benefits.

### 1.2 Format of Document

- 1.2.1. This document is in 2 distinct parts. Part 1 contains a Conservation Area appraisal which is based on 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisal', English Heritage, August 2005, but tailored to meet the needs of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.
- 1.2.2. Part 2 is a Design Guide, which will help secure designs that are sustainable and respect and enhance their townscape setting.

### 1.3 Part 1 – The Conservation Area Appraisal

- 1.3.1. The Conservation Area appraisal document outlines and defines the unique heritage and special interest of the area. The purpose of a Conservation Appraisal, as defined by English Heritage, is to ensure that,

*' the special interest justifying designation is clearly defined and analysed in a written appraisal of its character and appearance'.*

- 1.3.2 This should extend beyond an assessment of the buildings' architectural and historic interest, to include the road layout, street scene, vegetation and historical landmark features within the public realm, which all contribute to the quality and special distinctive

character of the area. By carefully controlling where sensitive alterations and careful maintenance of both properties and the public realm can be undertaken, the Council can work in partnership with local property owners to help preserve the character of the Conservation Area and also retain the values of its properties.

- 1.3.3 It is further advised by English Heritage that the preparation of the Conservation Appraisal document should not be seen as an end in itself but regarded as the first step in a dynamic process to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a designated area.
- 1.3.4 At present no definitive guidance exists within Wales on the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisal documents. Therefore this document uses the guidance produced by English Heritage (2005) as its base, albeit altered to reflect the local circumstance.

### 1.4 Part 2 – The Design Guide

- 1.4.1 The Design Guide provides guidance for applications for planning permission, Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent (including consent for advertisements and demolition works) within the proposed Tredegar Conservation Area. The main objective of the Guide is to help secure designs that are sustainable and respect and enhance their townscape setting.

***PART 1 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL***

## 2 Context

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Conservation Areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest (Section 69, Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).
- 2.1.2 Within Conservation Areas, the Local Planning Authority has a duty to protect and enhance the special architectural or historic features of interest. Conservation Area designation therefore gives special protection to these features.

### 2.2 Local Policy

- 2.2.1 Tredegar lies in the Heads of the Valleys Programme Area, as defined in the Wales Spatial Plan. The Wales Spatial Plan sets out a framework for Wales for the next twenty years, looking at all aspects of life in Wales; jobs and economic development, housing and land use, improvements in educational attainment and health, and sustaining and enhancing the environment.
- 2.2.2 For the Heads of the Valleys Area the Spatial Plan seeks to create an area, which is economically competitive and socially diverse. An area with strong, vibrant and well maintained town centres, linked by good quality public transport. The proposed townscape initiative for Tredegar is therefore required in order to deliver the Heads of the Valleys Programme vision.
- 2.2.3 The Blaenau Gwent Unitary Development Plan (2004) outlines specific environmental aims and policies with relation to demolition, alteration, extension and reuse of buildings within Conservation Areas. One of the environmental aims of the Development Plan is to protect and enhance the built environment and conservation of the built heritage.
- 2.2.4 Policy EN4 regarding town and village character and built design outlines, that in seeking to conserve the positive elements of the built environment, buildings of particular historic interest should be listed; however, in the case of groups of buildings, designation as a Conservation Area is more appropriate.
- 2.2.5 Policy EN6 directly relates to Conservation Areas and states:

*‘The demolition of buildings within conservation areas, will only be permitted where the proposal for the re-use or redevelopment of the site will preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Development of proposals that unacceptably detract from the character of a conservation area will not be permitted’.*

It is outlined in the supporting text that Castle Street and 'The Circle', within Tredegar, are future areas to be considered for Conservation Area designation.

- 2.2.6 Previous studies have been undertaken by BGCBC that have relevance to the preparation of a Conservation Area appraisal document. The contents and recommendations of these studies have been considered whilst preparing this document.
- 2.2.7 **Draft Tredegar Action Plan:** In 2000, a regeneration strategy and Action programme for the economic, social and environmental regeneration in the Tredegar Valley was produced in consultation with a range of organisations. This study identified that Tredegar demonstrates all the characteristics of a South East Wales Valleys town suffering from long term economic decline, lack of investment and associated physical, environmental and social deterioration.
- 2.2.8 **Tredegar Southern Area Regeneration Study and Masterplan:** In 2002, BGCBC, in partnership with the Welsh Development Agency, commissioned consultants to undertake a study to explore a range of potential opportunities for regeneration and development within the Tredegar Southern Area, to secure sustainable development and improve the vitality of the town.

### 2.3 Why Conservation Management is important

- 2.3.1 Caring for and conserving any future Conservation Area in Tredegar Town Centre will undoubtedly impose responsibilities upon building owners and occupiers, as well as upon the Council in terms of better enforcement and consistent determination of consent applications. Although this will have an inevitable cost, any additional outlay will be more than compensated by the long term benefits to the town centre's residents, commercial property owners and visitors.
- 2.3.2 Conservation should not be thought of as a barrier to innovative design or as a short term expedient in which cheap temporary work is considered acceptable. Greater consideration must be given to the "whole life" cost of maintaining a building, accepting that undertaking maintenance and repair on a "little-and-often" basis will be more economical in the long term, whilst also preserving an important historic link to the past for future generations.
- 2.3.3 Preserving and enhancing the continuing historic interest and special character of Tredegar Town Centre will depend upon the survival and maintenance of the particular details typical of the rich array of buildings and historic features within the town centre. The ornament and decorative features of buildings and historic features (like the Clock Tower) are especially fragile, and vulnerable to neglect of maintenance, poor repair, and removal and replacement with inappropriate new materials. Once damaged, rebuilding the special character of these buildings and features can be almost impossible.
- 2.3.4 Regrettably, some damage has already occurred to important commonplace features in most parts of Tredegar Town Centre. If the character of Tredegar Town Centre is to be maintained and enhanced for the future, extra care must be taken now to look after

the special interest of every property and historic features, and ensuring that new development proposals contribute to, rather than conflict with, the area's special character.

- 2.3.5 The Design Guide (Part 2) therefore seeks to encourage the public to act responsibly when planning any proposed alteration, extension or new development, in order to preserve and enhance its intrinsic architectural and historic character. It also seeks to encourage owners of derelict buildings to bring these back into effective use (where possible), and to undertake essential maintenance of listed buildings which should not be left to decay unnecessarily.
- 2.3.6 Caring for Tredegar Town Centre's historic character will therefore benefit everyone in both the short and long-term.

## 2.4 The Council's role in Conservation Management

- 2.4.1 Property owners and the Council would have an important role to play in preserving the character of a new Conservation Area. The "permitted development rights" that property owners enjoy allow many changes to be made to properties without formal permission from the Local Planning Authority. These alterations may be small in scale, but can be prominent and have a large (often adverse) impact upon the cohesive character of a Conservation Area.
- 2.4.2 Within a Conservation Area, the Local Planning Authority can control certain adverse changes to the built environment by the way that it determines applications for planning permission and listed building and Conservation Area consents. Such controls include:
- 2.4.3 **Article 4 Directions:** Minor alterations within a Conservation Area may need consent when they face the highway. Article 4 Directions seek to ensure that alterations are carried out in a way that can protect the special character of a Conservation Area, and where possible retain original architectural detail. This can often include window repair and replacement, the mounting of aerials and satellite dishes, and the removal of front or rear garden walls to accommodate driveways/parking.
- 2.4.4 **Development in Conservation Areas:** In considering applications for development in a Conservation Area, the Local Planning Authority has a duty to consider whether the character of the Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced. In making its assessment, the Council should consider the views of people who live in the area, and any others who respond to a Notice placed on site and in the press.
- 2.4.5 **Demolition in Conservation Areas:** Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of most buildings and structures in a Conservation Area.
- 2.4.6 **Tree Felling in Conservation Areas:** It is an offence to wilfully damage, remove, or carry out pruning or other work to a tree or woodland within a Conservation Area (including within gardens, parks and highways) without first giving six weeks notice of your intent to the Local Planning Authority.

2.4.7 **Listed Building status:** The listing of a building places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to consider the impact of development on its setting. Listing also means that proposals for alteration need to be fully justified. Applications for listed building consent are not subject to the policies and restrictions set in place by the Unitary Development Plan, and (to meet the different legislative requirements), Cadw has published a set of basic principles within a Circular: 61/96 "*Planning and The Historic Environment*". The detailed design guidance provided within the Design Guide has been prepared to ensure consistency with this advice.

### 2.5 Local Pressures

2.5.1 There are several concerns that have prompted the need for action. One of the foremost is that the unique historic "character" (i.e. the combined effect of all streetscape features which make a place identifiable) has already suffered some damage by the loss of historic buildings through demolition or dereliction, inappropriate building façade alterations (including insensitive shop front designs), and unsympathetic modern infill development. The overall quality of the public realm is also poor, despite recent improvements along The Circle/Castle Street.

2.5.2 Another important issue is how to manage pressure for change. On the one hand, such unique historic environments need special levels of care and attention if their special qualities are to survive. On the other, a sustainable "mixed use" town centre environment has to react to constantly changing economic circumstances. In Tredegar, the historic clearance of slum housing and the former colliery site have "freed up" a number of development sites (such as the two identified regeneration sites on Upper Salisbury Street and Lower Coronation Street; and the large-scale Tredegar Business Park site, which is already under construction).

### 3 Defining the Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

#### 3.1 General Character and Plan Form

3.1.1 The study area of Tredegar was spilt into a variety of character areas, which are graphically outlined in **Figure 3.1**. Through this process it was possible to outline the boundary to the Conservation Area within this. Key areas of character within the Tredegar study area include:

- **Recreation/ Park Extension-** Community recreational area, including tennis courts, bowling green and open park land;
- **Periphery Terrace-** Traditional Welsh terrace housing surrounding the eastern boundary extensions;
- **Health-** Tredegar General Hospital and modern health centre;
- **Modern Infill-** Modern development between old existing buildings e.g. Penuel Funeral Home;
- **Modern Civic-** includes the police station, fire station, magistrates court, telephone exchange and Government building;
- **Industrial Business-** covers the modern industrial unit development and old traditional industrial buildings;
- **Conservation Parkland-** existing extension of Bedwellty Park;
- **Vacant-** Land which at present is open space but subject to development pressures;
- **Core-** The centre of the town including 'The Circle' and retail developments along Castle Street;
- **Transition-** Area where development is more modern and changing;
- **Modern Retail-** Periphery of Gwent Shopping Centre and redeveloped transport interchange;
- **New Business Park-** area set aside for potential redevelopment.

#### 3.2 Defining the Boundary

3.2.1 The boundary review used three criteria to establish the area's special character.

- Test 1 - Does the area possess special historic interest?
- Test 2 - Does the area possess special architectural interest?
- Test 3 - Is the character or appearance desirable to preserve or enhance?

3.2.2 Based upon these appraisal criteria, it is recommended that the Conservation Area boundary should be as shown in **Figure 3.2**, which includes all of the town centre area, radiating out from the Town Clock in a northerly direction extending to the perimeter of Queen Victoria Street, to the west to Harcourt Terrace and Park Row, to the south to the boundary with Bedwellty Park and to Coronation Street in the east. Annotated notes describe the reasons for the proposed boundary. However, generally it was

chosen to concentrate on the key areas of special interest within Tredegar, limiting the boundary to the more compact town centre area and excluding dispersed open surrounding limits.

- 3.2.3 It should be noted that boundaries of Conservation Areas are not fixed and can subsequently be amended to reflect changes or developments over time.
- 3.2.4 Within the proposed Conservation Area boundary are two proposed Regeneration Areas. These cover Bridge Street, Iron Row and Shop Row, and the area on the corner between Upper Salisbury Street and Market Street (**Figure 3.2**). These are areas, which are considered to be under development pressure. In particular several planning applications have been received by the Council for the open area along Bridge Street, all of which were refused as the proposals were deemed unsuitable.
- 3.2.5 Development will be permitted within the regeneration area but under strict guidelines set out in the Development Brief.
- 3.2.6 For the proposed Conservation Area boundary to be adopted by the Council, we recommend undertaking consultation with local residents and business owners, local Ward Members/Councillors, representatives of local special interest groups, and the local Chamber of Commerce to ensure the interests of the area are fully represented.

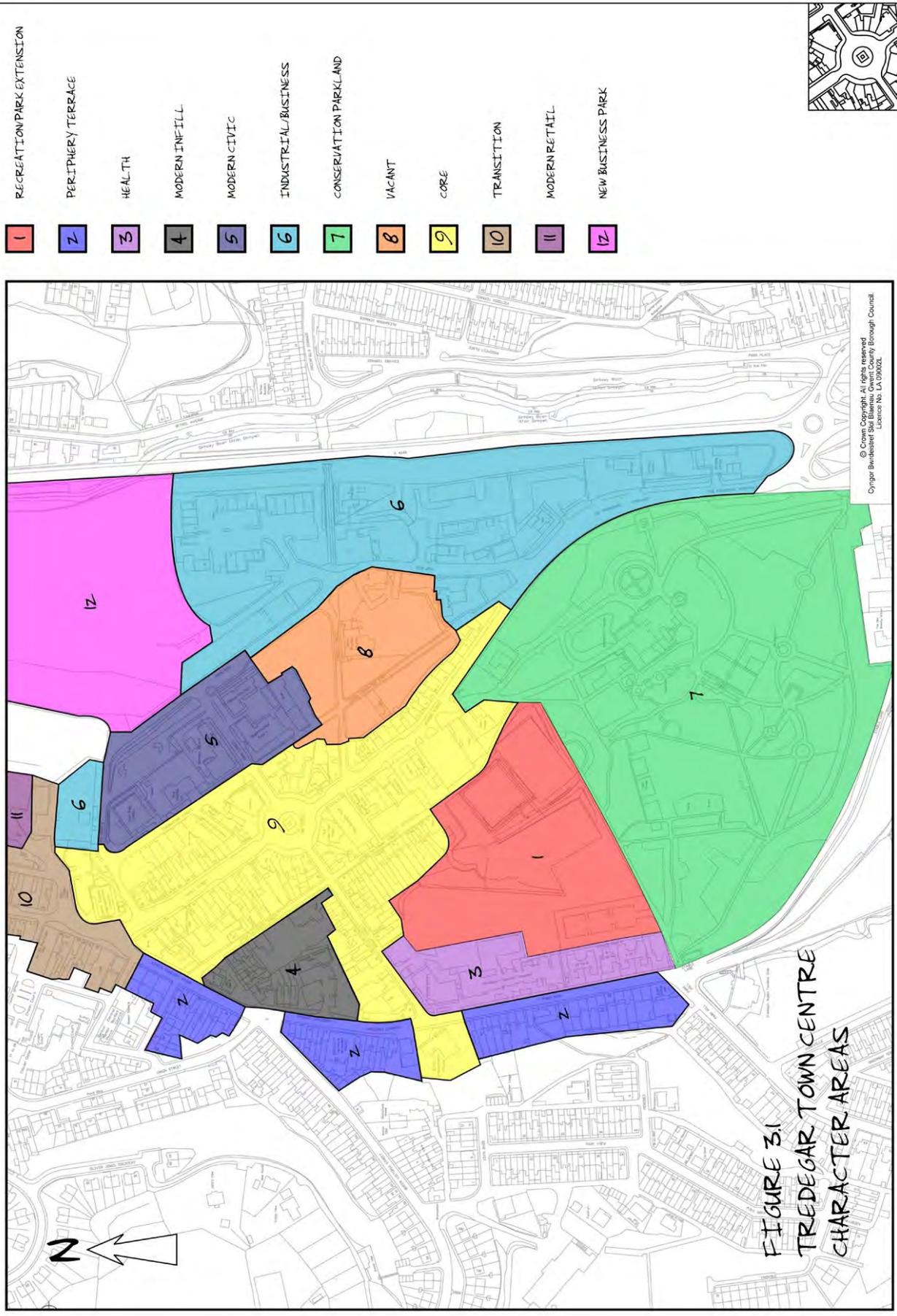


FIGURE 3.1  
TREDEGAR TOWN CENTRE  
CHARACTER AREAS



## 4 Assessment of Special Interest

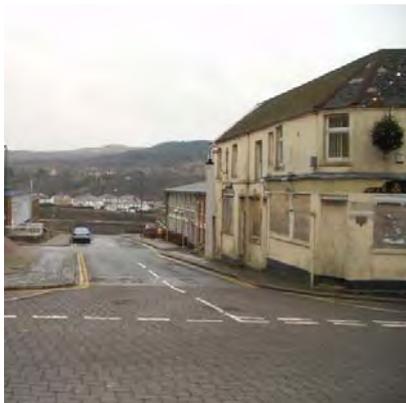
### 4.1 Summary of Special Interest

4.1.1 Two major elements signify the special interest of Tredegar. These are:

- The foundations of the National Health Service emanating from the Tredegar Medical Aid Society and the link with famous Welsh politician Aneurin Bevan; and
- The unique layout and pre planned nature of Tredegar Town Centre (it is documented that Tredegar is Britain's first planned town).

4.1.2 These along with many other elements provide Tredegar with its special interest and unique character base.

4.1.3 Evidence is dotted around the town centre which points to present day features and highlights back to Tredegar's interesting and industrial past.



*Number 10 'The Circle' was the administrative home to the Tredegar Medical Aid Society. Set up in 1890 to provide free health care to Miners and Ironworkers, for a small deduction from their wages on a weekly basis. This was the foundation concept to the formation of the National Health Service by Aneurin Bevan in 1948.*

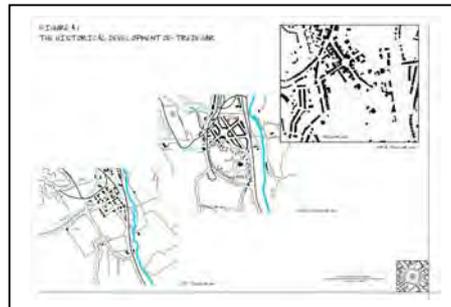
*Tredegar General Hospital as it stands today. Built by funds from the Tredegar Medical Aid Society in 1904.*





*Tredegar is the birthplace of influential MP Aneurin Bevan who introduced one of the biggest and most important national institutions in Britain today, the National Health Service.*

*The unique layout of Tredegar's town centre is thought to date back to the 1800's, and evidence exists that it was the first industrial planned town in Britain.*



*The Clock Tower is the focal point of Tredegar Town Centre, and was built in 1858 using Iron Works funding. It remains today as a dominant feature and point of interest.*

## 4.2 Location and Setting

### Location and Context

- 4.2.1 Tredegar is situated at the Head of the Sirhowy Valley, within the Borough of Blaenau Gwent in South East Wales, approximately 35 miles north of Cardiff and 18 miles north of Newport. The town centre of Tredegar is located in the floor of the Sirhowy Valley with the western edge of the town sprawling up the steep valley side.
- 4.2.2 The town is situated in an area which was once intensely mined and provided the basis of a successful iron making industry during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In recent years the town has suffered out-migration due to the decline of heavy industry which once supported the area and suffered economic recession, which has resulted in the area having an higher than average level of unemployment.

### Landscape Setting

- 4.2.3 Tredegar's landscape has been heavily influenced through its past relationship with heavy industry.
- 4.2.4 Tredegar lies on a mineral rich landscape above many once-intensely mined coal seams. The land upon which Tredegar lies is mixed in gradient, and was formed in this way due to its past relationship with the iron industry. The town centre is located in the mostly flat base of the valley. The western reaches of the town spread up the valley sides, thus forming very steep sloping roads and housing perched on the valley side.
- 4.2.5 Heavy industry did leave its scars on the landscape with large areas of coal waste and iron tipplings. These have now been reclaimed to provide land for recreation, pasture and forest.
- 4.2.6 Tredegar is intrinsically linked to its surroundings. Being at the head of a beautiful and impressive valley, Tredegar has dramatic panoramas from many of the areas within the town centre. Views across the floor of the valley and up to the valley bluffs are visible from the Town Clock through Iron Street, as well as between gaps in buildings along many of the streets.
- 4.2.7 The Town Clock itself is an impressive landmark, visible from nearly every elevated point, with the spire of the clock rising above many of the buildings surrounding it. The Town Clock is also visible at many lower levels with the four main streets of the town (Castle Street, Iron Street, Morgan Street and Market Street) leading to this one point.

### 4.3 Historical Development

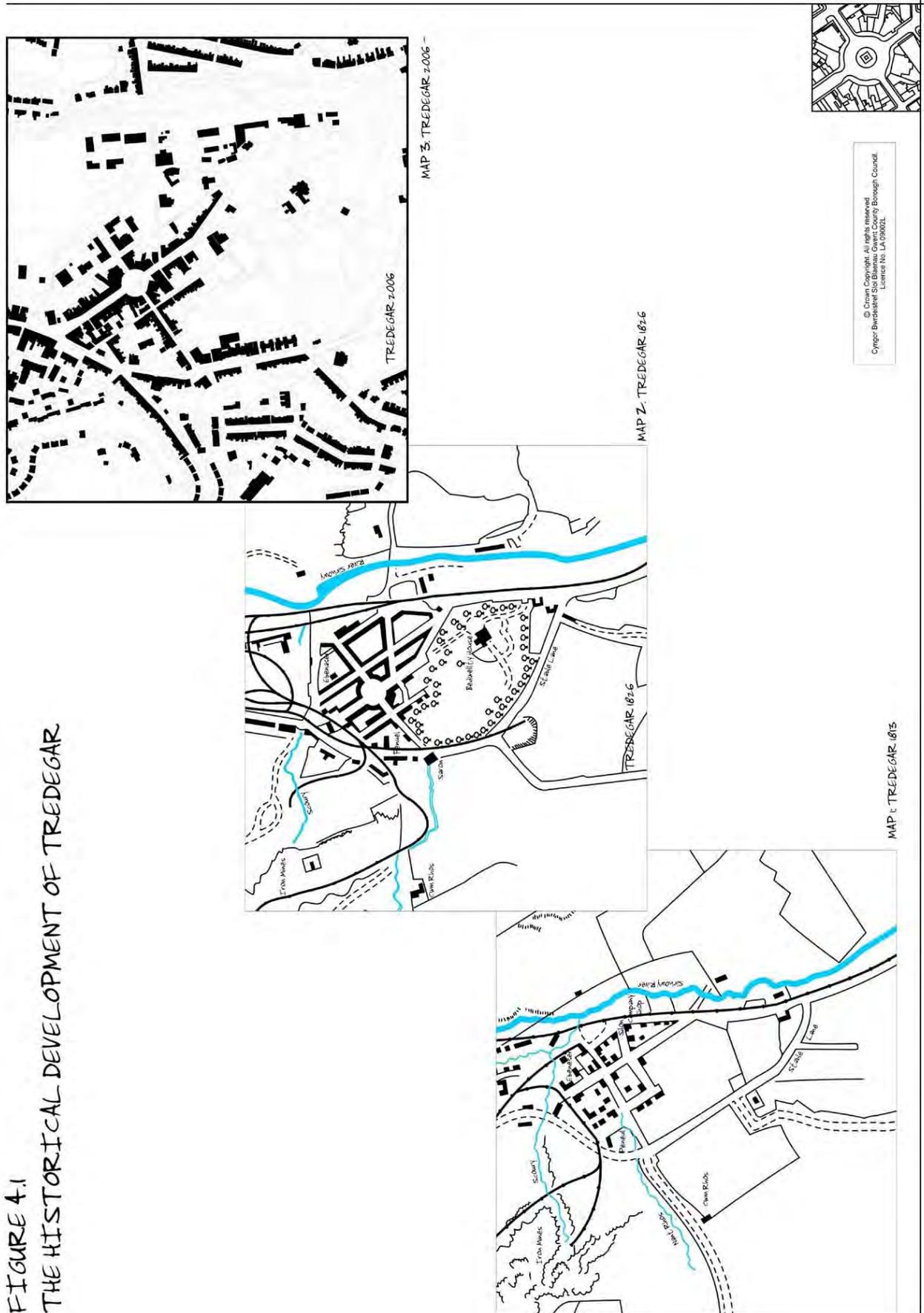
#### Background

- 4.3.1 Tredegar's historical development is closely linked to how Tredegar as a town operates today. The origins of the town have influenced how it has developed, its layout and the important buildings.
- 4.3.2 During the 18<sup>th</sup> century much of the upper reaches of the Sirhowy Valley (the area in which the town of Tredegar stands) was pastoral land inhabited by small dispersed thatched farms and cottages.
- 4.3.3 Before the development of the town of Tredegar, the area consisted of a few tracks connecting the ridgeways along the high ground between each valley. Only one bridge (Pont Sirhowy) crossed the river. An early Iron works was constructed a mile to the north of Tredegar (Sirhowy Ironworks) before the Tredegar Ironworks was constructed by Rev. Matthew Monkhouse and Richard Fothergill in 1800. In 1802 the first two of the Tredegar furnaces were completed and put into blast. The cost of the entire plant was estimated at the time to be one hundred thousand pounds sterling.
- 4.3.4 It is believed that construction started on dwellings within Tredegar near to the time of opening of the Ironworks in 1800. Initial buildings were not planned or set in a specific layout, although later development was built along predetermined lines. A block of houses was built along the tramroad, at the bottom end of what was to become Morgan Street, and an isolated terrace of houses, River Row, on the opposite side of the river to the old Pont Sirhowy. Company Shop was formed in a house near the river, and the Castle Inn, Miners Arms and Tredegar Arms erected. The first new chapel, Capel Siloh, was built with communal graveyard in 1806 in Bridge Lane.
- 4.3.5 The Sirhowy tramroad was constructed in 1805, to link the two ironworks with the port at Newport; this was the longest tram road in Britain at that time and was 23 miles in length. In 1806, two more balance furnace were added to the Tredegar works, making it the biggest Ironworks in the area, larger than the Sirhowy plant.
- 4.3.6 During the Second decade of the 19th Century a change occurred and systematic development took place, which altered both the appearance of the town and established the formal, axial layout that still exists today. This is despite the formal planning of industrial towns not occurring in other parts of Britain (and probably the world) until Saltaire, in 1850. As such Tredegar holds a unique place in the history of urban planning.
- 4.3.7 It is believed that the person responsible for the development of the new town was Samuel Homfray Senior, owner of the Tredegar Iron works.

### Detailed Planned Development

- 4.3.8 **Figure 4.1 Map 1** shows Tredegar in its early stages of development. At this stage (1813) it is possible to see that two features stand out as being intrinsically related to the new town's development and the future mansion and Bedwellty Park. These are the rudimentary grid of three parallel streets immediately out of the iron works and a curving new road west of the town. At this time Morgan Street had not been constructed, neither had any connection between the three parallel streets and the road going north of the Sirhowy Ironworks. Company Shop can be seen on the map, erected in 1811 along with Market House.
- 4.3.9 It would seem that space was left at this time for the development of a wider main street (Morgan Street), evidence that planning of the development of the town occurred. Additionally it is viewed that, the inclusion of a 'by pass' (curved road west of the town) was not a fortuitous occurrence but provided as part of a deliberate scheme to leave space for a specific use, in this case a private park away from the smoke and contamination of the ironworks. It would have been easier, if a road was required, to continue on the long straight street through the town, but the 'by-pass' allowed for a large area of undeveloped land between it and the Sirhowy Tramroad to be secured. At early stages of planning it is thought that this area was set aside for a house for the Ironworks manager, but later (post 1813) the park was integrated into the town layout by continuing Morgan Street, the main axis of the town as a driveway through the park up to the front of Bedwellty House. It is assumed that Samuel Homfray Senior bought the parkland in order to provide a fine residence for himself and his son after 1813.
- 4.3.10 By 1820 changes had occurred. The main difference was the insertion of a broad new road (Morgan Street) and a circular market place (The Circle), giving a very formal layout. The basis of the layout was a large circular area bisected along both axes by two roads, the main axes being Morgan Street and the minor axes being Iron Street and Market Street.
- 4.3.11 Some sources believe that the central area of Tredegar known as 'The Circle' actually started as a square. However, other evidence suggests that this was planned as a circle from a very early stage, for example, the façade of the three original Inn buildings follow the curve of the circle.
- 4.3.12 A plan of Tredegar in 1826, is shown in **Figure 4.1 Map 2**. The planned town with both Bedwellty House and its park is evident, along with a fourth Chapel (Capel Saron), adding to the three already present, positioned at the top of Market Street. Capel Saron is believed to have been positioned exactly at the end of the western arm of the crossed axis, with the front façade of the chapel at right angles to it, to form a stop-end to the vista just as the entrance to Bedwellty House formed a stop end at the lower end of the cross axis. The chapel was erected in 1819 and this probably marked the completion of the new town development.

FIGURE 4.1  
THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TREDEGAR



- 4.3.13 It is stated that the end of any attempt at formal planning in the new town of Tredegar seems to have coincided with the cessation of the links between the Tredegar Ironworks and Sirhowy Ironworks. Despite this, development continued and further streets were added, however none seemed to be part of the preconceived plan.
- 4.3.14 Today Tredegar's existing street pattern is almost identical to the first layout in the 1820s. A current plan of Tredegar today is shown in **Figure 4.1 Map 3**.

### **Origins and Historical Development of the Foundation of the National Health Service**

- 4.3.15 Britain's National Health Service began in 1948 and was brought about by Aneurin Bevan, a Tredegar Politician and MP for the Ebbw Vale Constituency who was Minister for Health and Housing in 1945. Aneurin introduced the National Health Service based upon the model of the Tredegar Workmen's Medical Aid Society, which started in the 1890's. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century nearly all of the town's residents were covered by the Medical Aid Society scheme through subscriptions from their wages which entitled members and their dependents to comprehensive, medical, surgical and dental services, according to need and free at the point of care.
- 4.3.16 The administration centre for Tredegar's Medical Aid Society was within No .10, 'The Circle', (**Photo 4.1**), within the offices for the Tredegar Iron and Coal Co mutual society (1890) formed by miners and ironworkers. The society had grown out of the Health and Education fund first formed in Tredegar in 1871 by management of the Tredegar Iron and Coal companies. It was introduced to combat diseases such as typhoid, tuberculosis and cholera. Workers contributed 3d in the pound of their wages to receive medical care for themselves and families.
- 4.3.17 This early model formed by the Tredegar Medical Aid Society was intrinsic in providing the foundation for the National Health Service system which was introduced by Aneurin Bevan. From the basic beginnings of this society an idea was formed which led to the creation of one of the great institutions in Britain today.
- 4.3.18 The society was instrumental in providing a hospital within Tredegar (built in 1904), today known as Tredegar General Hospital (**Photo 4.2**) with land for the new hospital donated by Lord Tredegar. Funding came directly from the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company, other local employers and organisations, individual donations but mainly from coal workers who agreed to maintain the hospitals by having a halfpenny deducted from their wages. Bevan was a member of the Cottage Hospital Management committee around 1928 and chairman in 1929/30.
- 4.3.19 The Society continued in a modified fashion after the introduction of the NHS, which took over many of the services provided by the Medical Aid Society, until it was wound up in 1995.

**Photo 4.1.** No 10 The Circle as it stands today. Etching in the upper frosted window reads 'Tredegar Medical Aid Society'.

A plaque marking the Aneurin Bevan Heritage Trail is present here.



**Photo 4.2.** Tredegar General Hospital (2006). Tredegar General Hospital is still in operation today, originally founded through funds from the Medical Aid Society.

### Tredegar Today

- 4.3.20 The individual and impressive street layout of Tredegar remains today, as do intangible historical links to the Medical Aid society, for example the still operational General Hospital. Located around Tredegar are pieces of evidence which plot the history of the town, in terms of both its industrial past and its link to the foundation of the NHS. This evidence is told today to visitors and residents of Tredegar through the Tredegar Heritage Walk and Aneurin Bevan Heritage Trail which circle the town, highlighting key places of interest and giving life to Tredegar's interesting and eventful past.
- 4.3.21 However, what once was a bustling, smoky, heavy industrial town is now a much quieter place to live. With the decline of the heavy industry came massive unemployment. Today, Tredegar is attempting to rebuild its economy based around small light industries, retail, service jobs and tourism, whilst attempting to retain its important linkages to its industrial past and preserve its areas of special interest.

### 4.4 Architectural Significance – Listed Buildings

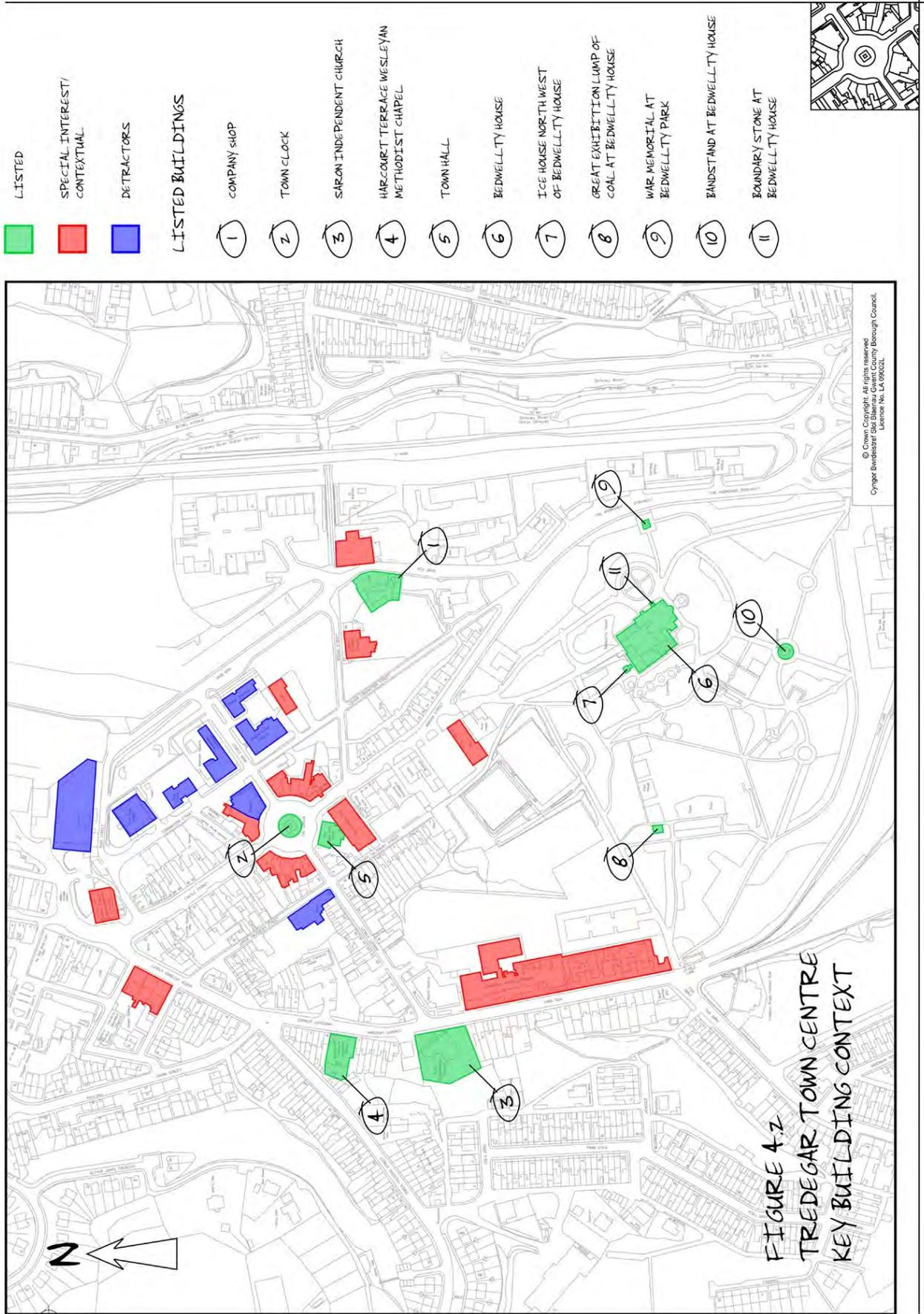
- 4.4.1 A number of buildings within the proposed Tredegar Town Centre Conservation Area hold historical and/or architectural significance, and under this premise have been added to the Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council listing schedule, **Figure 4.2**. Some of the buildings shown in **Figure 4.2**, such as the Ice House, War memorial and Bedwellty House itself are located within the existing Conservation Area boundary of Bedwellty Park. However, these are added on to the Key Building Context plan (**Figure 4.2**) for contextual interest.

#### Company Shop

- 4.4.2 Company Shop (**Photo 4.3**) is located on Shop Row near the corner of Bridge Street and was registered as Grade II listing in 2001.
- 4.4.3 The company shop is believed to have been erected in 1811, and is an example of the truck shops operated by industrial concerns in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was looted and ransacked in 1816 and opened as a co-operative store in 1868. The shop is probably the only surviving element (apart from the road layout) of the important development of Tredegar as a pre planned town.
- 4.4.4 The shop is of two and three storeys in brown stone, with roofing formerly of slate. The three storey roof is hipped and has corner pilasters in exposed stone.
- 4.4.5 This building is listed as an extremely rare survival of a Company Shop, and is the only remaining building from the earliest period of the planned industrial settlement of Tredegar.

**Photo 4.3.** Company Shop is still in existence today, but in a state of structural disrepair.





### Town Clock

- 4.4.6 The Town Clock (**Photo 4.4**) stands in the centre of 'The Circle' within Tredegar. It was listed initially in 1962 and amended in 1999, and is Grade II\*.
- 4.4.7 The clock is made of cast iron and was erected in 1858. It was cast by Charles Jordan of Newport, whereas the clock itself was made by J.Joyce of Whitchurch, Shropshire. A committee to erect the clock was set up by Mrs Davies, wife of the Tredegar Ironworks manager, of Bedwellty House. It was planned that the clock was to be illuminated by gas and was to strike on the quarter and half hours. The cost of the clock was estimated as £1000, with £400 donated by Mr R. P Davies, and a public bazaar run by his wife raising the remaining funds. The foundations were dug in autumn 1858 and the clock finished in 1859. Originally there were flights of iron steps facing each of the four axial streets; these were later removed in 1933.
- 4.4.8 The clock is wholly cast iron, standing on a giant Tuscan measuring 70 feet (21.34 meters) in height. The east side is inscribed with '*Chas Jordan, Iron Founder, Newport, Mon*', the south side, '*presented to the town of Tredegar from the proceeds of a bazaar promoted by the late Mrs R.P.Davies, Erected 1858*', and on the west side with a figure of the Duke of Wellington and '*Wellington England's hero*'. The clock face has large roman numerals to dials and decorative spandrels. A weather vane is rested on an Ogee roof at the top of clock.
- 4.4.9 This clock is listed as an extremely rare and remarkable cast iron Town Clock in a prominent townscape location. An important survivor of the iron industry both in constructional and social terms.

### Harcourt Terrace Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (Including Schoolroom And Front Railings)

- 4.4.10 This Methodist chapel is located on the eastside of Harcourt Terrace. The building was registered in 1992. It is currently listed as Grade II.
- 4.4.11 The church building dates back to the late 19th Century and was remodelled in the early 20th Century, with a schoolroom added in 1883. The first chapel was built in 1825 as an English Wesleyan chapel for English residents arriving to work at the ironworks. The chapel became head to the circuit in 1964 and acquired its first resident minister. There is no date stone present to give an exact date to the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century rebuilding, but the Lombardic gable and the neo-Norman triplet would suggest a date of circa 1880. The central porch to the building was removed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 4.4.12 The chapel is constructed of a course Pennant rubble, with ashlar detail and a slate roof. It has a three bay gable front, with the bays divided and terminated by thin pilaster strips. As already outlined there is a Lombardic corbelled gable with a central neo- Norman triplet, the shafts being decorated with scalloped capitals. The ground floor centre has five rows of five round-arched lancets, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the central entrance was replaced



Photo 4.4. The Town Clock

by present round-arched doors in outer bays. The doors have stone voussoirs and half glazed fanlights.

- 4.4.13 The school room has a three bay gabled façade of similar stone to the chapel. It has rounded arched windows to both storeys with ashlar heads and keystones. A 20<sup>th</sup> Century door can be found to the ground floor left. The cast iron railings have decorative finials, strengthening posts with entasis and urn finials.
- 4.4.14 Inside the chapel is a striking rectangular galleried interior with a early 20<sup>th</sup> Century gallery front, deeply sprayed at the front end and richly decorated with plaster festooned with vines set on a background of shields linked at the top by branches and at the middle by a strap-like band. At the pulpit the gallery curves inwards and continues in a similar manner along the front of the choir gallery. There is an Art Nouveau style communion table, and a balustraded pulpit. The organ is brought from a chapel in Ferndale. To the rear of the building are two stain glassed windows dating from 1904.
- 4.4.15 This building is listed primarily for the special interest of the interior decoration.

#### **N.C.B Club**

- 4.4.16 This building is located in the southwest quadrant of 'The Circle', in the town centre of Tredegar. It was listed in 1999 as grade II.
- 4.4.17 The NCB Club (**Photo 4.5**) was formerly the Town Hall, and was built in 1892. Foundation stones were laid by Messrs R.H. Spencer and David Price. The building replaced the earlier 19<sup>th</sup> Century Town Hall which stood on the same site. This building is now used as a club.
- 4.4.18 The building is constructed of Pennant stone with Forest of Dean ashlar detail and an artificial half-hipped slate roof. It is a two storey building in Gothic style, with a lower angled block to the left facing Morgan Street. The main block of the building is symmetrical with seven bays, three alternative bays with dormer gables. The centre bay has a gothic arched doorway and a moulded ashlar arch on short red granite shafts with leaf capitals. Over the door is a shallow balcony on elongated stone consoles with ashlar balustrade. There are three four-light mullion and transome windows either side of the main entry. Along the first floor the outer windows are arranged in triplets, with large nine-light mullion and transome windows set below dormer gables.
- 4.4.19 The left block is a simple Tudor style possibly a later addition, with a concrete tiled roof. The building is two storey with three bays, with the centre one angled and gabled with wide pedimented eight-light mullion and transome windows to each storey.
- 4.4.20 This building is listed for its architectural interest, being a well designed late 19<sup>th</sup> Century former Town Hall.



**Photo 4.5.** The NCB Club – formerly the Town Hall

### Saron Congregational Chapel (Inc. attached school room)

- 4.4.21 This building is located on the east side of Park Row and was listed in 1999 as Grade II. It was built in 1858 by Rev. Thomas Thomas of Lanore, a renowned chapel architect and Congregational Minister. This first chapel was built in 1819 and then rebuilt in 1828.
- 4.4.22 The chapel has a stuccoed classical façade with slate roof and a three bay pedimented front (See [Photo 4.6](#)). These are dressed with entablature giant Ionic pilasters. The words ‘Saron Independent Chapel’, are present on the front of the church with an oval plaque below reading ‘built 1858’. There are tall round-arched outer windows with simple glazing, moulded architraves and vermiculated keystones. There is similar detail to the central triplet and doorway below. The left side elevation is of four bays with tall-round arched windows set in a shallow recess. There is similar detail mirrored on the right side. The schoolroom is single storey, stuccoed with hipped roof of artificial slate. There are twelve-pane sash windows to the right within round-arched openings.
- 4.4.23 Inside the chapel there is a three-sided gallery with long panels, applied in a grained finish, with plain iron columns and block pews facing inwards to side bays. There is an elaborate and large serpentine-front pulpit with decorative cast iron balusters. The ceiling is boarded and ribbed on a deep plaster cove with a very large centre plaster rose. There is a rear lobby with sliding sash window, marginally glazed with central lattice panes. A shaped stone tablet with elaborate carved surround, fluted tapering pilasters, semi-circular top with carved books and text stands in this area, registered to John Lewis 1849 and Rev. Robert Morris 1825. In the schoolroom is a plaque of old chapel ‘Saron Independent Chapel, Built 1819. Rebuilt 1828’.
- 4.4.24 This building is listed as a striking classical chapel designed by a well-established latter 19<sup>th</sup> Century chapel architect with an interior of high quality.



**Photo 4.6.** Saron Congregational Chapel also has an interior of very high quality.

## 4.5 Architectural Significance – Unlisted Buildings

- 4.5.1 Tredegar also houses a number of other important historical buildings, which, at present, are not listed under the Councils schedule, but none-the-less have an important historical background which contributes to the special interest of the area. These are also shown in [Figure 4.2](#).

### No. 10 ‘The Circle’

- 4.5.2 Number 10 the circle was home to the offices of the mutual society (1890) formed by the miners and ironworkers of the Tredegar Iron and Coal Company. This is where the Tredegar Workmen Medical Aid Society was run from 1890. This building is marked with a plaque which reads: *These were the offices of a mutual society (1890) formed by miners and ironworkers of the Tredegar Iron and Coal Co. Through modest weekly contributions, they were able to employ doctors, a surgeon and run a hospital. Bevan’s political*

*influence locally enables socialist working class nominees to gain control.'*

- 4.5.3 As well as housing the administrative offices to the Medical Aid Society, Number 10 also housed dental surgeries. After the introduction of the NHS No.10 was sold to Monmouthshire County Council on the condition that the society remain in one of the upstairs rooms, which they did until the society was wound up in 1995. The building was then used until around 2003 as a Gwent County Council careers office among other things and in spring 2005, Tredegar Development Trust started negotiations to lease it from Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. The Trust intends to restore the building to its former glory.
- 4.5.4 Standing within 'The Circle', this building is a visible piece of history to all who visit Tredegar. The building positively contributes to the character of the area, more from its intangible history as the foundation of the NHS as opposed to its architectural quality.
- 4.5.5 This building has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair over recent years, and its restoration by the Tredegar Development Trust is much welcomed.

#### **The Circle**

- 4.5.6 'The Circle' as a whole offers an important grouping of buildings which give Tredegar a definitive and imposing centre point. The historical importance of 'The Circle', as already stated is linked to the pre-planned development of the industrial town centre, and the individual buildings and elements provide evidence of Tredegar's iron and coal industry past e.g. the Town Clock and No. 10.
- 4.5.7 The form of the buildings in a circular nature is unique giving rise to the areas historical and special interest. A range of buildings have been housed within 'The Circle' over the years from public houses and clubs to a library and the administrative centre for the Tredegar Medical Aid Society.
- 4.5.8 The buildings are of a mixed architectural style, with some replacement and adaptation from the original structures having taken place.

#### **Tredegar Cottage Hospital**

- 4.5.9 In the 19th century people of Tredegar requiring Hospital treatment had to be operated on in their own homes. These were small overcrowded buildings and unsuitable for this purpose. For something that was more serious and needed hospitalisation, the patient would have to travel to a near-by larger town. Because of transport and road conditions at this time, this could be a very arduous journey. Through the Tredegar Medical Aid Society the cottage hospital was built and was opened for accident cases in 1903.
- 4.5.10 In 1907 a women's and children's ward was opened, and in 1914 a new wing. Many alterations, extensions and improvements were carried out whilst in the control of the Medical Aid Society. The

hospital now has an Emergency Department for minor cases but is mainly used for treatment of the elderly.

- 4.5.11 This building has had a dominant presence within the community of Tredegar for many years and still has today. It is important to the characterisation of Tredegar for both its link with the foundation of the NHS and for its architectural qualities.

### **Churches**

- 4.5.12 A number of churches, in addition to those that are listed, were built within Tredegar during the late 1800's and early 1900's in order to provide places of worship for the large number of people attracted to the area to work at the Iron Works. These buildings, which are still present today, provide a dominant presence within the environment. These large detailed architectural structures, add to the special interest of the area, by not only adding to the positive nature of the town centre's environment but also provided clues back to Tredegar's industrial past.
- 4.5.13 The two main unlisted church buildings within the proposed Conservation Area are Castle Street Congregational Church, a large stone built structure situated at the top of Castle Street and the Siloh Baptist Church on Bridge Street.

### **Masonic Hall**

- 4.5.14 This building stands at the southern end of Morgan Street. The building was constructed in 1893 and the hall was dedicated and opened to Freemasons on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1894 by Mrs G A Brown. In 1923 an extension was built to the lodge.

***PART 2 – DESIGN GUIDE***

## 5 Basic Design Principles for All Properties

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1. This Design Guide sets out the ideals that must be balanced with all the other considerations material to planning (including socio-economic and environmental considerations). The approach recommended within this Guide is not “does the development meet minimum standards” but **“how can the best design be achieved, which respects and enhances the character of the Conservation Area, within the bounds of what is acceptable in other terms”**.

5.1.2. The overarching guidance objectives applicable for all properties are as follows:

- All development (including alterations, extensions and new build) should:
  - Be appropriate in scale, materials and design, so that it does not detract from the quality of the area;
  - Relate to existing architectural scale and detail;
  - Conserve the essential elements which combine to give the area its special character;
  - Protect and enhance views in to and out of the area, and the character and appearance of streets and roofscapes;
  - Pay special attention to the relationship between development and the surrounding open areas;
  - Use appropriate materials which preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area; and
  - Pay regard to the historic value of the built-up area.
- Demolition of properties should be avoided, in preference for the refurbishment and re-use of such buildings (particularly listed buildings) wherever possible.

5.1.3 In design terms, “character” is a matter of both material objects and the way they are arranged, and occur at a variety of scales such as:

- The pattern of the town centre settlement within the local topographical/landscape setting (including important views and roofscape details);
- The town centre’s grid-like street patterns (including plot series or blocks, highways and open spaces);
- The orientation and massing of the buildings themselves; and
- The detailing and materials used throughout the town centre.

5.1.4 Any development proposal (whether for alterations, extensions, new build or demolition works) will fall within one of these levels of scale, and will have visual and aesthetic implications for both higher and lower levels of scale (i.e. façade alterations may

specifically affect the individual building's detailing and materials, but will also impact upon the whole streetscape's visual setting).

- 5.1.5 This section of the Design Guide has therefore been divided into sections dealing with each of these "scale" elements, as follows:
- **Topographical Setting – Important Views;**
  - **Street Hierarchies & Enclosure;**
  - **Urban Grain & Scale/Proportion of Buildings;**
  - **Gardens, Parking & Boundary Treatments; and**
  - **Architectural Detailing & Materials.**

### 5.2 Topographical Setting - Important Views

#### Views & Vistas/Historic Landmarks

- 5.2.1 The town of Tredegar currently sits on a rising site, extending predominantly parallel (on a north-south axis) to the Sirhowy River and valley below. The neighbouring settlement of "Georgetown" is located on the eastern side of the valley.
- 5.2.2 As one of the first "planned" towns in the UK, the original town centre in Tredegar was built on the western upper valley slope with a distinctive "grid-like" pattern of streets (extending along a north-south axis along Castle Street/Morgan Street, and east-west axis along Market Street/Iron Street), following the natural contours of the slope.
- 5.2.3 This distinctive street pattern, together with the town centre's elevated hilltop location, enables good views along streetscapes within the town centre out to its wider landscape setting, and from its wider landscape into the town centre's distinctive skyline – which is dominated by both attractive features (such as the Clock Tower, larger scale civic buildings including chapels and the Town Hall) and unattractive features (such as the huge "bulk" of the Kwik Save supermarket complex to the north-east of the town).
- 5.2.4 Historic landmarks such as the Clock Tower (**Photo 5.1**) and the Town Hall (**Photo 5.2**) enhance the legibility of the town centre and reinforce its distinctive sense of place. New development should not obstruct important views of such features as seen along streetscapes.

New development should not block or obstruct views of important landscapes or character features (such as the Clock Tower) as seen from highways, footpaths, bridleways, public open spaces or other public areas.

When considering new development proposals, consideration should be paid to how and where the proposed works would be seen and how this would impact upon the setting. This should include considering:

- Long distant views to and from the site; and
- How the development is viewed within its immediate context;
- Whether the proposed development would affect views to and from historic landmark features.



**Photo 5.1:** The Clock Tower is a distinctive landmark in Tredegar Town Centre.



**Photo 5.2:** The Town Hall is another distinctive landmark in "The Circle".

### 5.3 Street Hierarchies & Enclosure

- 5.3.1 For the purposes of this guidance, the term “street” will refer to the highway AND the plots that line it either side, including public open spaces, taken together as a unit.
- 5.3.2 The “planned” nature of Tredegar’s town centre has a distinct hierarchy of streets, denoted by the wider street widths and dominance of three-storey properties along Castle Street, The Circle and parts of Morgan Street (as shown in **Photos 5.3 & 5.4**).
- 5.3.3 Away from this central linear thoroughfare, street widths are much narrower with predominantly two storey buildings subordinate in scale, architectural detail and variety of materials.
- 5.3.4 The secondary status of such streets such as Market Street and Upper Salisbury Street provide a clear division between the commercial uses focused along the “primary” Castle Street and The Circle, to the more residential character areas nearby (as shown in **Photo 5.5**). This clear street hierarchy adds to the town centre’s legibility and sense of place.
- 5.3.5 The topography of the town centre can create various changes in level across streetscapes and individual plots. Most historic buildings have been designed to sit at actual ground level, with floorplates stepping down the hill where necessary, to accommodate any changes in level and following the natural gradient of the site.
- 5.3.6 Another distinctive feature is that most properties occupying prominent corner plots have some architectural or massing emphasis illustrating their important nodal location (i.e. larger scale pub buildings are often located on corner plots, such as the currently vacant unit on the junction of Market Street/Upper Salisbury Street) (**Photo 5.6**). **Figure 5.1** illustrates examples of how properties can “turn corners” effectively whilst maintaining the “traditional” pattern.



**Photo 5.3:** Castle Street is one of the widest streets in Tredegar, with three storey properties denoting its status as a primary commercial area.



**Photo 5.4:** Three storey buildings on The Circle denote the importance of this focal space.



**Photo 5.5:** Many side streets in Tredegar, such as Market Street, are much narrower compared to Castle Street/Morgan Street, denoting their secondary status as residential areas.



**Photo 5.6:** Most properties occupying prominent corner plots (such as the vacant shop & pub on the junction of Market Street/Upper Salisbury Road) have some architectural or massing emphasis illustrating their important nodal location.



A herringbone arrangement of plots as a solution to the corner problem



A herringbone arrangement of plots with a corner building



A courtyard arrangement



A wide frontage plot with side garden on the side street

**Figure 5.1:** Examples of how to “turn a corner” effectively (Source: pg. 31, Stratford Upon Avon Design Guide, 1999).

**Street Hierarchy & Enclosure - Design Guidelines:** The existing street hierarchy should be preserved and enhanced, with new development proposals respecting their location within this defined pattern.

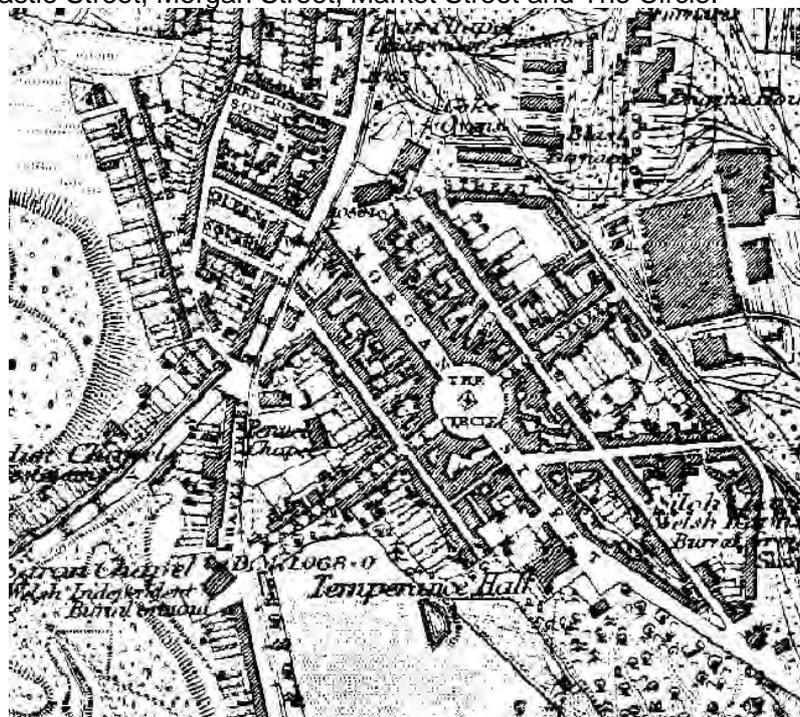
New development proposals should seek to reflect the local street hierarchy in scale, massing and architectural detail (i.e. design proposals which are appropriate for a site on a primary route (such as Castle Street) may not be suitable for a development on a secondary or tertiary street (such as Market Street).

When considering development proposals, consideration should be paid to:

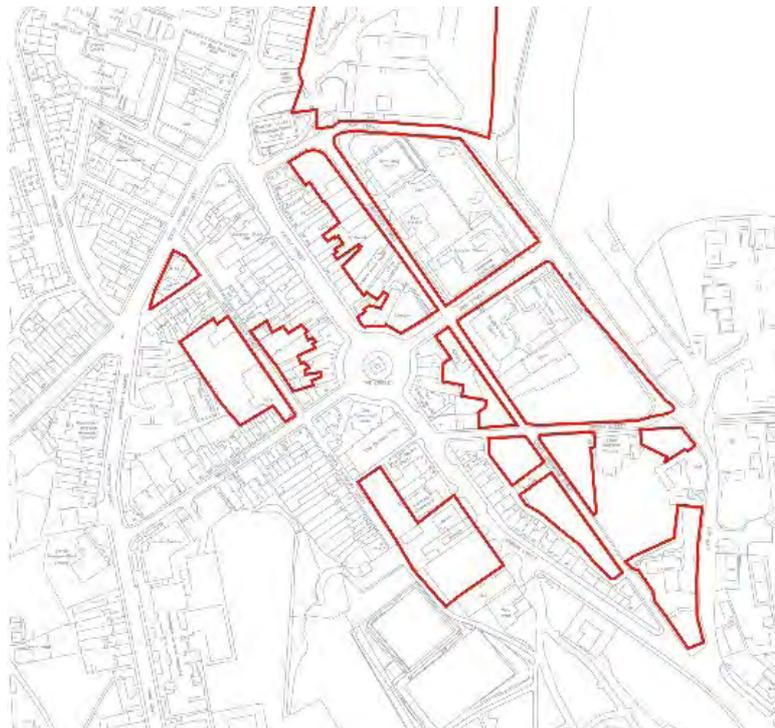
- How the proposed development would relate to the hierarchy of the surrounding urban fabric in terms of scale, massing and architectural detail;
- How new development has been designed to sit at actual ground level, with floorplates stepping down the hill where necessary, to accommodate any changes in level and following the natural gradient of the site;
- (For corner plots), how the proposed development would address each street frontage and whether it would have any appropriately designed massing or architectural treatment to emphasize its important nodal location (as shown in [Figure 5.1](#)).

## 5.4 Urban Grain & Scale/Proportion of Buildings

- 5.4.1 **Figure 5.2a** (below) illustrates the traditional “urban grain” of historic Tredegar (1884-1886). A comparison with **Figure 5.2b** (overleaf) shows where insensitive block clearance and modern infill development have eroded this traditional “urban grain” in places, yet it remains relatively intact along key streets such as Castle Street, Morgan Street, Market Street and The Circle.



**Figure 5.2a:** 1884-1886 Map showing historic “traditional” urban grain of Tredegar Town Centre.



**Figure 5.2b:** 2006 Map showing areas highlighted with red boundaries, where the “traditional” urban grain has been eroded/modified by modern infill development or slum clearance.

- 5.4.2 In terms of scale and massing, building heights are predominantly limited to a maximum of two storeys with building heights along the commercial core of Castle Street/The Circle predominantly three-storeys, in proportion to the wider street widths indicating this as a primary route.
- 5.4.3 Despite examples of insensitive and inappropriate façade alternations throughout the town centre, there remains a relative consistency in the historic scale and massing of buildings and their façade designs.
- 5.4.4 This traditional historic “urban grain” within the town centre also creates a strong sense of enclosure along streetscapes. The historic “urban grain” of the town centre is predominantly narrow terraced plots, with continuous building lines of properties set directly onto the back of the pavement with little or no front gardens/boundary treatments (as shown in **Photo 5.7**).
- 5.4.5 This creates a clear division between the public realm, and the semi-private laneways and private garden spaces to the rear of properties (as illustrated in **Figure 5.3**). Due to the predominant narrowness of the streetscapes, most properties within Tredegar do not have front garden spaces, thus most car parking is accommodated on street.



**Photo 5.7:** As shown on Market Street, the historic “urban grain” of the town centre comprises narrow terraced plots, with continuous building lines of properties set directly onto the back of the pavement with little or no front gardens/boundary treatments



**Figure 5.3:** A clear definition between public and private space a fundamental tenet of best practice in effective urban design (Source: pg. 65, “The Urban Design Compendium”, English Partnerships, 2000)

5.4.6 Unfortunately, the otherwise continuous building line has been disrupted by demolition of blocks of terraced buildings, leaving behind large gaps in the streetscape (such as along Upper Salisbury Street) (**Photo 5.8**).



**Photo 5.8:** The otherwise continuous building line along Upper Salisbury Street has been disrupted by demolition of a block of terraced buildings, leaving behind a large and visually unattractive “gap” in the streetscape.

5.4.7 To the west of the town centre (Coronation Street, Iron Row, Shop Row & Lower Coronation Street), whole swathes of the original urban grain have been demolished, and partially replaced by insensitively designed and inappropriately massed buildings (i.e. the Civic Centre buildings which completely fail to reflect the original “grain” of plot dimensions) (**Photo 5.9**), or just left as large areas of scrub wasteland (such as along Iron Row/Shop Row – **Photo 5.10**).



**Photo 5.10:** The historic urban grain along Iron Row/Shop Row has been completely demolished, apart from the Silhol Chapel and the old “Truck Shop” (now derelict). Although the largest cleared area has been landscaped, its undulating topography restricts its function as a “pocket park”. Elsewhere, these “gap” areas have become scrub wasteland used for fly-tipping and parking.

5.4.8 The narrow open spaces to the rear of historic properties within the town centre were predominantly used as private garden space. However, many properties along primary routes (such as Castle Street/Morgan Street) have removed rear boundary walls to convert garden spaces into rear parking plots or to provide service delivery access. In the case of Lower Coronation Street, the demolition of the historic terrace has left behind a slim wedge of scrub wasteland, now used for informal parking (**Photo 5.11**).

5.4.9 This has eroded the sense of enclosure and distinction between public and private spaces along such streetscapes. It would be more in keeping with the “traditional” character of the town centre to re-establish these “perimeter” block patterns to provide a clear distinction between public and private spaces, as shown in **Figure 5.4**.



**Photo 5.9:** Many of the Civic Centre buildings (such as the Police Station shown above) completely fail to reflect the original plot dimensions of the terraces cleared from this area during the 1960s.



**Photo 5.11:** The demolition of the historic terrace on Lower Coronation Street has left behind a slim wedge of scrub wasteland, now used for informal parking.

5.4.10 **Chapter 8** illustrates how new development on sites such as Upper Salisbury Road could innovatively re-establish the “traditional” urban grain to provide terraced “townhouses” with parking to the rear.

**Urban Grain - Design Guidelines:** The existing “urban grain” should be preserved and enhanced. Where possible the “traditional” perimeter block pattern of terraced buildings should be retained to provide a clear distinction between public and private spaces (as shown in **Figure 5.4**).

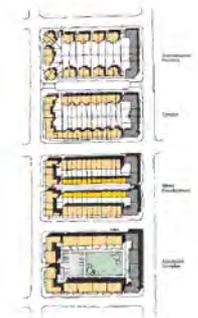
New development proposals should seek to retain the historic grain of the site (i.e. reference to historic plans) and follow existing building lines by being located at the back of pavements to create well defined and harmonious street frontages. The division between public and private space should also be clearly defined by terraced building orientation and use of appropriately designed boundary treatments (such as stone boundary walls and railings).

When considering development proposals, consideration should be paid to:

- How the characteristically dense “urban grain” of the area can be reinstated to reflect the traditional form, by encouraging new development to respect the historical pattern of plot boundaries (particularly where a proposed new building would cover two or more traditional building plots) and responds to the height of surrounding buildings;
- Ensuring the proposed new development proposals would not have large front gardens with properties setback from the pavement to accommodate private car parking, as this is uncharacteristic of the town centre’s urban grain pattern and would disrupt the otherwise continuous building lines and sense of enclosure along streetscapes. Where domestic privacy at ground floor level is considered to be a design constraint, consideration should be given to window glazing options or conversion for commercial use (if within an appropriate location);
- Infill buildings should be built up to the party walls on either side, with foundations designed to negate the need for any gaps.
- How the new development proposals would retain (or provide new appropriately designed) rear boundary walls, to provide a distinction between public and private spaces, and retain the otherwise continuous building line;
- How gateway entrances to rear courtyards (for parking or service delivery) would be designed to facilitate vehicular visibility whilst preserving predominant buildings lines (i.e. gates should be hung at the back of pavements to sit well within the street frontage, and should open inwards).
- How access for emergency and service delivery vehicles has been considered without compromising the streetscape character (i.e. the use of appropriately designed fire hydrants and wet/dry risers can be installed to avoid the need for large vehicle entrances).

**Scale/Proportion of Buildings- Design Guidelines:**

- The eaves height of any new, extended or altered buildings should reflect the eaves heights of other buildings in the vicinity (generally height in excess of 9metres will not be permitted).
- Facades of new, extended or altered buildings on the street frontage should not exceed in width the facades of those buildings within the vicinity (i.e. the original plot width). Wider buildings (covering more than 1 building plot) can be accommodated by stepping the façade and/or having a different wall finish.



**Figure 5.4:** The organisation of terraced buildings into “perimeter blocks” (i.e. continuous building lines) provides a clear distinction between public spaces to the front, and private space to the rear (Source: pg. 65, “The Urban Design Compendium”, English Design Partnerships, 2000).

## 5.5 Gardens, Parking & Boundary Treatments

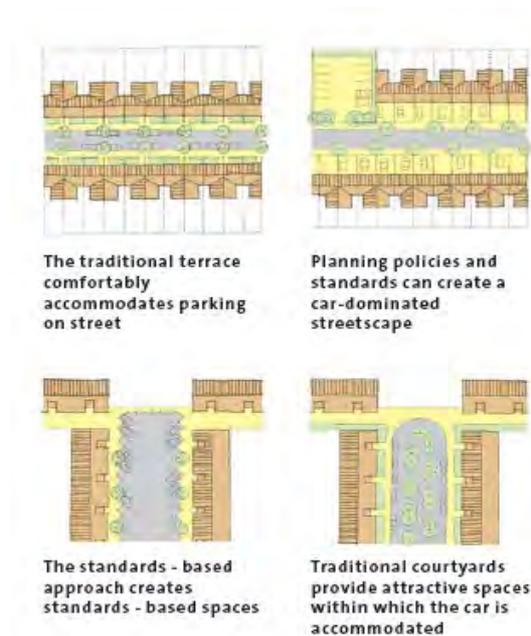
- 5.5.1 Tredegar Town Centre was historically designed and constructed before car ownership became widespread. As such, many of the terraced properties are set at the back of the pavement (or very near to it) with either no or very small front garden spaces, no boundary railings or hedges, and no dedicated parking areas or garages to the front or side of the property (as shown in **Photo 5.12**).
- 5.5.2 This means that residents have to park either along streets or on “wasteland” where properties have been cleared and the sites left open (as shown on **Photo 5.13**).
- 5.5.3 It would be inappropriate to introduce large front garden spaces and dedicated parking driveways/garages (i.e. hard-standing resulting in cars being parked directly in front of the house), as this would starkly contrast to the other properties’ character within the area.
- 5.5.4 Where dedicated parking provision is needed, this can often be provided to the rear of properties (such as within rear-accessed courtyards or garages) or via on-street provision of “residents only” spaces (as shown on **Figure 5.5**). However, the latter option often requires effective monitoring and enforcement by the Council to ensure that non-residents wishing to access the nearby town centre do not use spaces.



**Photo 5.12:** Many terraced properties in Tredegar (such as shown here on Lower Salisbury Street) are set at the back of the pavement (or very near to it) with either no or very small front garden spaces, no boundary railings or hedges, and no dedicated parking areas or garages to the front or side of the property.



**Photo 5.13:** Illegal parking on the open areas along Lower Coronation Street – despite the sign prohibiting this.



**Figure 5.5:** Examples of how on-street parking can be positively incorporated into streetscapes, rather than sticking to rigid “highway standards” which can create car-dominated spaces (Source: “By Design”, DETR, 2000).

- 5.5.5 Parking to the rear of existing properties may be permitted where there is a carriageway entrance off the street. However, consideration should be paid to retaining boundary treatments (i.e. boundary walls, gates and railings) where they would not adversely affect visibility, in order to maintain enclosure along streetscapes.
- 5.5.6 Where a property or development plot may have room for a garage to the rear of the property accessed via a rear laneway, and the Council considers this would not visually detract from the aesthetic quality and character of the streetscape, it should be designed in sympathy with the property to which it relates and without detriment to the overall area.
- 5.5.7 Some rear areas of plots (notably Upper Salisbury Street and around the Surgery on Lower Coronation Street) also have inappropriate rear boundary treatments (such as metal fencing or close board timber fencing) (as shown in **Photo 5.14**), which are visually inappropriate where they face open countryside, public rights of way or public open spaces.



**Photo 5.14:** The visually unattractive metal fencing around the Medical Centre on Lower Coronation Street

**Gardens, Parking & Boundary Features- Design Guidelines:**

- New developments should not have large front garden spaces and dedicated parking driveways/garages (i.e. hard-standing resulting in cars being parked directly in front of the house), as this would starkly contrast to the other properties' character within the area.
- Properties should front onto pavements, with car parking (where needed) provided via rear-accessed courtyards or garages or via on-street provision of "residents only" spaces.
- If rear-parking courtyards are to be provided, consideration should be paid to retaining the design of boundary treatments (i.e. boundary walls, gates and railings) to ensure they would not adversely affect visibility.
- The use of surface materials in rear "yards" (where deemed appropriate) should be of traditional, simple and robust stone pavements. Planting within such courtyards should be limited to pots or tubs or narrow planting strips along walls so car parking can be safely accommodated within narrow plots.
- If garages are to be permitted for the rear of properties, they should be designed in sympathy with the property to which it relates and without detriment to the overall area. For example, brick built or rendered blockwork garages should match the material of the main property, with roofs of a shape common to the other properties in the street. Wherever possible, traditional hinged garage doors should be used. "Up-and-over" doors, where acceptable, should be timber; vertical boarded; and stained or painted a dark colour. Aluminium shutter-style doors should be avoided.
- Gardens should be located to the rear of properties, and should not include front gardens with properties set back from the road.
- Rear gardens should be enclosed with appropriately designed boundary features – commonly stone or rendered/brick walls, "traditional" cast iron railings, timber fencing or hedges.
- Boundaries facing open countryside, public rights of way or public open spaces should NOT be closed board fence, which should be restricted to side and back boundaries shared with other built-up plots.

## 5.6 Architectural Detailing

- 5.6.1 Most of the historic buildings within Tredegar Town Centre share common characteristics, such as similar architectural detailing (i.e. window/roof/door materials and styles).
- 5.6.2 This distinctive, regular “rhythm” of architectural elements and detailing helps to create consistent streetscapes, adding to the local distinctive sense of place. As such, these architectural detailing elements should be preserved and enhanced where possible, and appropriately replicated within any new development proposals.
- 5.6.3 Architectural detailing will vary according to the hierarchy of streets (discussed in [Section 5.3](#)). The three-storey buildings located along primary routes (such as Castle Street/Morgan Street) will often have more architectural detailing, than buildings located on secondary routes (such as Market Street) which tend to have simpler architectural treatments.
- 5.6.4 Architectural detail should be functional. It should promote legibility, reflect street hierarchy, contribute to scale, proportion and rhythm and help protect the building from the weather (i.e. durability).
- 5.6.5 The Council should refuse proposals where they are unsympathetic to the existing building. There should be no unnecessary clutter on the facades of new buildings, as this will visually compete with adjacent historic buildings thereby disrupting the otherwise “harmonious” streetscape.
- 5.6.6 In buildings which have lost important original features (such as some of the commercial properties along Castle Street/Morgan Street, the Grade II\* listed “Truck Shop” and No.10 The Circle – the former Medical Aid Society building), the presumption should be in favour of restoring the building to its original appearance or replacing the missing features with designs which complement the architecture of the building in question and the area as a whole.

### Alterations & Extensions

- 5.6.7 When considering undertaking any alterations or extension work to buildings within the proposed Conservation Area, the aim should be to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. This can be achieved by:
- Repairing rather than replacing original windows and doors (or where original windows and doors have already been replaced unsympathetically, when the opportunity arises such features should be replaced with new doors and windows which reflect the original style predominant in that area);
  - Building walls in matching brick or rendering to that used on the main property, and use matching detailing (including matching roof slates) for any small extensions;

- Retaining and (in the case of new development) including appropriately designed “traditional” features such as chimneys, roof eaves, doors and windows.

5.6.8 Extensions (including garages) should in general be confined to the rear or least important facades of the building, and should not upset the scale or proportions of the building or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the neighbouring buildings.

**Photo 5.15** shows a negative example of an inappropriately designed extension.



**Photo 5.15:** The vacant club’s extension on Upper Salisbury Street does not match the original building in terms of scale or materials.

#### Extension & Alterations- Design Guidelines:

When extending or altering a property, the aim should be to achieve a design that makes the new work look as though it is part of the original building and not an “afterthought”.

- When developing design proposals for an extension to either the front or side of a property, consideration should be paid to ensuring the proposed architectural detailing can help promote legibility, reduce scale, provide protection from the weather and respond to the local context;
- Applicants should provide large-scale indicative drawings illustrating the proposed architectural detailing, including cross and vertical sections to illustrate the proposals in the context of the wider streetscape.
- If safety rails are required for new buildings, simple bars in the window openings should be used rather than Juliet balconies or railings which project from the face of the building; and
- Extensions should not project beyond the building line,
- Porches should be avoided, as these are not characteristic of Tredegar – but where deemed appropriate, should be designed so as to form an integral part of the existing dwelling.
- Side extensions (where deemed appropriate, given Tredegar’s predominant terraced character) should be stepped back from the front wall in order to maintain the symmetry of the original house.
- Flat roofs will not normally be acceptable for extensions, and should complement the style of the building to which it is attached;
- New windows should be of a similar type and positioned to align with existing windows;
- Where possible, materials used should match existing;
- Where extending at the rear, a joint extension with a neighbour can have cost and design advantages;
- Dormer windows should be avoided, or (where deemed appropriate) should:
  - Not dominate the house or roof,
  - Not extend above the ridge line of the roof, nor break the line of the eaves or the edge of the hip;
  - Be of a similar type to existing windows and should, as far as possible, be aligned with those below.
- Balconies, whether projecting or recessed should not be positioned on street frontages. Balconies on the rear of existing buildings will not be permitted but may be allowed on the rear elevations of new development where these are not open to public view.

#### Roofs (Verge, Eaves & Ridges), Chimneys, Dormers & Rooflights

5.6.9 The most common roof verge detail within Tredegar Town Centre is a simple trim with a slate undercoat (as shown on **Photo 5.16**) – not interlocking concrete roof tiles with terracotta ridges tiles (as shown on **Photo 5.17**). Bargeboards and boxed eaves should be avoided as should decorative ridge tiles - unless occupying a prominent location and adjacent properties have similar decorative features.



**Photo 5.16:** A slate roof with a simple trim and undercoat.

- 5.6.10 Chimneys are a “traditional” character feature of most historic buildings within Tredegar (as shown in **Photo 5.18**).
- 5.6.11 Chimneys are commonly located on top of the main roof ridge, frequently “flush” with gable ends denoting where properties are terraced. Most have an integral breast, and are rectangular in plan, orientated at right angles to the roof ridge, often with a cap, corbelled weathering and chimney pots. Most are made of brick or simple course rubble stone, with some rendered.
- 5.6.12 Caution should be exercised in the use of dormers, as these are not common character features and are predominantly only found on three-storey properties lining Castle Street/Morgan Street and The Circle (as shown in **Photo 5.19**).
- 5.6.13 In cases where they are deemed appropriate (i.e. the reinstatement of an original building feature), they should be limited to avoid visually cluttering roofscapes. The position of the dormer within the roof should be either just above the eaves (between the top plate and lower purlin) mid-way up the roof (between purlins or above a single purlin) or, exceptionally with the cill of the dormer below the eaves level – as found with some of the properties on The Circle (**Photo 5.19**). In the latter case, care must be taken with the position of rainwater pipes.
- 5.6.14 In all cases, the dormer ridge should be well below the main roof ridge.
- 5.6.15 The dormer should be smaller in height and width than the window openings below and, as far as possible, should be vertically aligned with them. Cheek walls should be as narrow as possible, and faced in either lead or render as should the gable. The eaves of the dormer roof should be below or at the same level as the window head, not above. Simple gabled dormers should be encouraged – not hipped dormers or flat roofed dormers with cornice moulding etc...
- 5.6.16 Like dormers, rooflights should be smaller in height and width than the window openings below and, as far as possible should be vertically aligned with them. Ideally they should be set flush with the roof surface.



**Photo 5.17:** Concrete interlocking roof tiles and terracotta ridge tiles (as shown on this modern infill building on Elim Court, Upper Salisbury Street) are not appropriate.



**Photo 5.18:** Many of the historic terraced buildings with Tredegar have retained their original chimneys



**Photo 5.19:** Example of one of the unique dormers on The Circle.

**Roofs, Chimneys, Dormers & Rooflights - Design Guidelines:**

- Roof verge details should be a simple trim with a slate undercoat, not interlocking concrete roof tiles with terracotta ridges tiles.
- Bargeboards and boxed eaves should be avoided as should decorative ridge tiles - unless occupying a prominent location, and adjacent properties have similar decorative features, not dominate the house or roof.
- Chimneys are important character features and should be retained – they should be located on top of the main roof ridge, “flush” with gable ends denoting where properties are terraced, with an integral breast, rectangular in plan, orientated at right angles to the roof ridge, with a cap, corbelled weathering and chimney pots.
- Chimneys should be made of brick or simple course rubble stone, with smooth finished or painted render appropriate to the rest of the building.
- Dormers should be limited to avoid visually cluttering roofscapes, and only included where there is an architectural precedent for having such features on the property.
- The position of the dormer within the roof should be either just above the eaves (between the top plate and lower purlin) mid-way up the roof (between purlins or above a single purlin) or, exceptionally with the cill of the dormer below the eaves level. In the latter case, care must be taken with the position of rainwater pipes. In all cases, the dormer ridge should be well below the main roof ridge.
- Dormers should be smaller in height and width than the window openings below and, as far as possible, should be vertically aligned with them.
- Cheek walls should be narrows as possible, and faced in either lead or render as should the gable.
- The eaves of the dormer roof should be below or at the same level as the window head, not above.
- Simple gabled dormers should be encouraged – not hipped dormers or flat roofer dormers with cornice moulding etc...
- Like dormers, rooflights should be smaller in height and width than the window openings below and, as far as possible should be vertically aligned with them. Ideally they should be set flush with the roof surface.

**Doors & Windows**

5.6.17 Most buildings have retained their original pattern of regularly spaced and designed patterns of fenestration (usually with glazing bars/transoms and mullions set back within a reveal) and consistent floor-to-ceiling heights (usually in diminishing proportions from the ground storey upwards). However, the original timber sash windows have mostly been replaced with insensitively designed UPVC windows (as shown on **Photo 5.20**), which detracts from the aesthetic quality of the streetscape and the architectural integrity of the buildings.

5.6.18 Door and window openings should have a visible means of support for the material above (i.e. lintels in squared rubble or dressed stone etc...) (as shown in **Photo 5.21**).

5.6.19 Door and window frames should normally be set back from the face of the building to give a shadow line. The presence and design of glazing bars or lead comes should be suited to the opening size, position of the window/door in the building and the overall form of the house. If casements are proposed, they should normally be traditional or modern flush closing as opposed to “storm proof” designs that have projecting external flanges.



**Photo 5.20:** Example of a typical insensitively designed standard UPVC window in Tredegar, which has replaced an original sash window.



**Photo 5.21:** Example of a timber sash window (not in Tredegar) with stone lintel above, glazing separated by timber mullions and transoms.

- 5.6.20 With regard to energy efficiency, in many cases, the most significant heat loss through existing windows (both casement and sash) is due to drafts as opposed to the thermal value of the glass. This is to say that greater improvements can often be achieved for less investment by ensuring the windows are properly draft proofed rather than replacing windows with double-glazing. Also, thicker single glazing (6mm) can provide nearly the same thermal value as double-glazing.
- 5.6.21 The type of door proposed should suit the building type and the position of the door within the building. Glazing on doors should follow the same pattern as the windows.

**Windows & Doors - Design Guidelines:**

- Historic buildings' original fenestration (glazing bars/transoms and mullions set back within a reveal, with lintels) and pattern of floor-to-ceiling heights should be retained, and replicated within new development proposals.
- Original sash windows should be retained wherever possible, with the use of appropriately design alternative windows where unavoidable.
- Standard UVPC windows and doors detract from the aesthetic quality of the streetscape and the architectural integrity of the buildings, and should be avoided wherever possible.
- Thicker glazing is preferable to double-glazing, unless sensitively designed to suit the building type.

**Canopies & Porches, Vents & Service Boxes (Non - Commercial)**

- 5.6.22 Canopies and porches are not characteristic on residential properties within Tredegar. On the rare occasion where they occur, they tend to be unusual historic character features on focal landmark buildings such as the Castle Hotel (**Photo 5.22**).
- 5.6.23 Porches and canopies should therefore not be provided in new design proposals for residential properties. Design guidance for the appropriate use of canopies for shop fronts is discussed in more detail in **Chapter 6**.
- 5.6.24 All vents and service boxes should be as inconspicuous as possible, and incorporated into the building or roof rather than externally protruding from the building wherever possible.

**Canopies & Porches, Vents & Service Boxes - Design Guidelines:**

- Canopies and porches are not characteristic on residential properties within the Tredegar, and should be avoided.
- Existing "unique" canopies and porches on historic buildings should be retained if part of that building's original architectural design.
- All vents and service boxes should be located as inconspicuous as possible, and incorporated into the building or roof rather than externally protruding from the building wherever possible.



**Photo 5.22:** The unique canopy entrance to the Castle Hotel is a historic architectural feature, which should be retained.

### Rainwater Goods and Telecoms Equipment

- 5.6.25 Lead and/or cast iron gutters and downpipes were characteristic on many properties within Tredegar due to their solid, robust, rigid and durable nature, although some have been replaced with modern plastic rainwater goods.
- 5.6.26 Plastic rainwater goods are unsatisfactory within Tredegar Town Centre, as they jar with the traditional character of a historic building. Plastic PVC rainwater goods are often inferior in appearance and quality to cast iron and can fail rapidly in exposed locations. They can also be liable to buckling and distortion in prolonged exposure to sunlight and may discolour unattractively. PVC rainwater goods may be acceptable on rear elevations.
- 5.6.27 Cast iron “rain water goods” should therefore normally be used for any listed building and should be the first choice for any other historic building (or new building), unless lead is the existing material.
- 5.6.28 Cracked or broken cast iron rain water goods should be de-rusted or repaired or replaced in matching material and section downpipes.
- 5.6.29 The installation of satellite dishes and other telecommunications apparatus (including television aerials, burglar alarms etc...) on the elevations of properties can have a harmful visual effect (**Photo 5.23**).
- 5.6.30 Television aerials, satellite dishes and other telecommunications equipment should (whenever possible) be sited on the rear of property and mounted below eaves level.



**Photo 5.23:** Many buildings within Tredegar' have unsightly satellite dishes installed on the front of properties rather than on rear elevations – which detracts from the visual quality of the streetscape.

#### Rainwater Goods and Telecoms Equipment - Design Guidelines:

- Plastic rainwater goods are unsatisfactory within Tredegar Town Centre - cast iron rain water goods should normally be used for any listed building and should be the first choice for any other historic building (or new building), unless lead is the existing material.
- Television aerials, satellite dishes and other telecommunications equipment should, whenever possible, be sited on the rear of the property and mounted below eaves level.

## 5.7 Materials

- 5.7.1 One of the defining characteristics of Tredegar Town Centre is the limited palette of traditional materials (generally granite, limestone slate and render). The use of this limited palette of materials created harmonious streetscape patterns, and has established the town centre's distinctive sense of place and unique historic character.
- 5.7.2 However, there are numerous examples throughout the town centre where inappropriate materials have been used, eroding this consistent pattern of detailing. The use of yellow brick and concrete interlocking roof tiles with terracotta ridge tiles (as shown in **Photo 5.24**) are common on modern infill developments, often with poor quality mortar joints and brick bonding.
- 5.7.3 Other examples include the Library (**Photo 5.25**) and the other civic centre buildings (**Photo 5.26**), where the use of stark concrete facades, punctuated with horizontal strips of glazed windows, contrasts with the mass of historic buildings on narrow "burgage" plots and the "traditional" rhythm of fenestration found elsewhere in the town centre.
- 5.7.4 In most cases, all new development works (including alterations, extensions or new build) should use "traditional" or other durable, high quality "natural" materials that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.
- 5.7.5 Alternative materials (including uPVC, aluminium etc...) should not be encouraged because of their poor weathering qualities and/or appearance contrasting with the character of the building's "original" materials (i.e. the covering of original render or brick/stone work with "pebble-dash", or exposed concrete or modern "coloured" brick).
- 5.7.6 The following design guidance (relating to specific render, brick, stone and slate detailing) sets out some basic guidance for proposed alteration, extension or new build works for all properties.



**Photo 5.24:** The use of yellow brick and concrete interlocking roof tiles with terracotta ridge tiles (as shown here on Queen Victoria Street) is inappropriate.



**Photo 5.25:** The Library's stark concrete façade with vertical detailing punctuated with horizontal strips of glazed windows visually detracts a key corner plot located on the otherwise attractive Circle public open space.



**Photo 5.26:** Similar inappropriate materials are used on many of the "civic" buildings off Iron Row, such as the Police Station (shown above).

### Materials- Design Guidelines:

- The established palette of materials (including granite, limestone, slate, stone, occasional brick, smooth or painted render etc...) within Tredegar should be used in all new development proposals (whether for alterations, extensions or new build) to reflect local context and fit into the existing streetscene.
- Other high quality materials may be allowed where they are sympathetic and can be shown to preserve and enhance the character of the area.

When considering development proposals, consideration should be paid to:

- Full colour drawings of elevations showing texture and (where possible) colour sample/board detailing proposed materials should be provided with any application for alternation, extension or new build works;
- The Local Planning Authority should consider using conditions requiring samples of all materials to be attached to planning approvals.
- The appropriateness of the proposed material to local context, and how durable/sustainable the material is;
- The quality of proposed mortar joints and brick bonding, in terms of how this can contribute to the overall quality of the design.
- Materials which disrupt the harmony of established streetscapes (such as silver/light grey cladding, yellow brickwork or concrete etc...) will not be allowed.
- The use of reclaimed traditional materials is sustainable and will be encouraged.

## 6 Design Guidance: Shopfronts, Signage & Security

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 Part of Tredegar’s special historic importance is associated with its traditional commercial centre, with many small shops units located along parts of Morgan Street, The Circle, Castle Street (**Photo 6.1**) and extending northward beyond the proposed Conservation Area boundary to Commercial Street (**Photo 6.2**), and the visually unattractive “Gwent Shopping Centre” (**Photo 6.3**) and Tredegar Business Park (located on the site of the former colliery, and extending southwards to the Promenade D’Orvault) (**Photo 6.4**).



**Photo 6.4:** The Tredegar Business Park, off Bridge Street/Iron Row extends southwards along Promenade D’Orvault, with a proposed new extension northwards on the site of the former colliery. The industrial units are predominantly single storey “shed” developments, which do not visually contribute to the aesthetic quality of the area. Better screening with appropriately designed stone-clad boundary walls and planting would help reduce the adverse visual impact upon the neighbouring area.

- 6.1.2 Many of the historic commercial properties within Tredegar have “traditional” shop fronts, which have remained largely unchanged since the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, and which are based upon a classical design whereby the proportions of the shop front relate closely to the scale and appearance of the building (as illustrated in **Figure 6.1**). According to the BGC GC’s **SPG 1 “Design Guidance for Shop fronts”**:

*“A shop front is an integral part of the building into which it is inserted, and its design should reflect the age and character of the host building...A shop front can be thought to consist in part of a “frame” formed by pilasters (or columns), traditionally topped by console boxes and a fascia. This “frame” gives a visual impression of support to the building above. Within the “frame” is set the display windows and doorway of the shop. Traditionally, the doorway is often recessed. The display window sits above a stallriser and can be divided by vertical mullions and horizontal transoms. As a general design principle, these elements should be combined to achieve a balanced and pleasing visual effect”.*



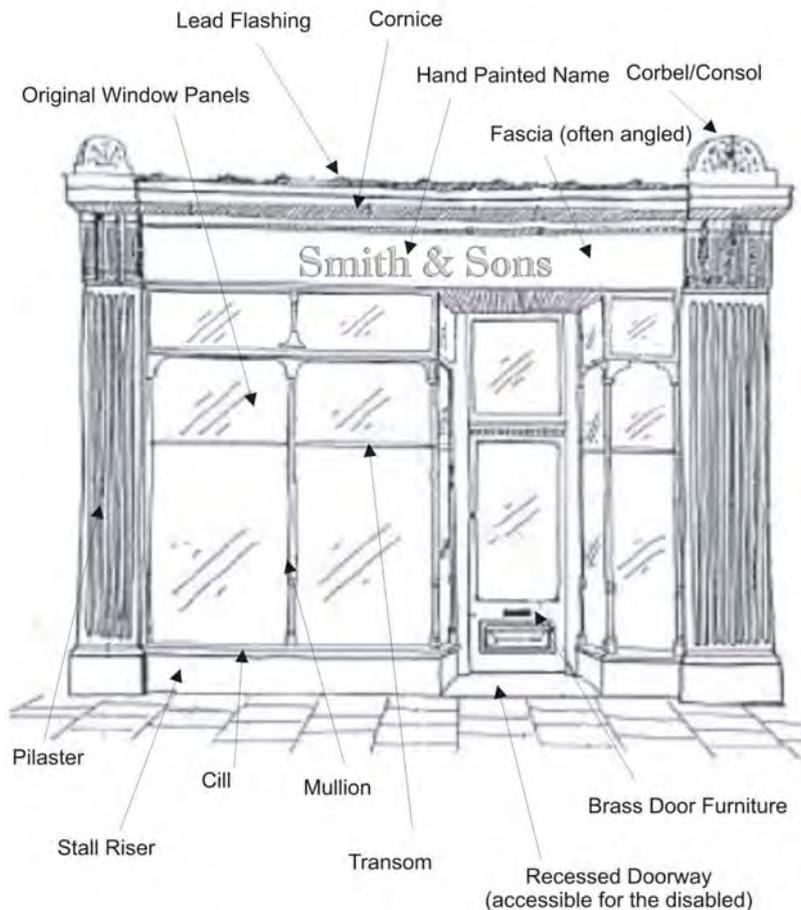
**Photo 6.1:** Castle Street is an important commercial part of Tredegar Town Centre, with focal views leading towards the Clock Tower on The Circle.



**Photo 6.2:** The commercial parts of the town centre extend northwards along Commercial Street (beyond the proposed Conservation Area boundary).



**Photo 6.3:** The Gwent Shopping Centre (including the Kwik Save supermarket) is a visually unattractive monolith, which spreads across Stockton Way to Commercial Street.



**Figure 6.1:** Elements of a traditional shop front, comprising pilasters (or columns), traditionally topped by console boxes and a fascia (often angled), a recessed doorway, and display windows (often divided with vertical mullions and horizontal transoms) sitting above a rendered or tiled stallriser (minimum 450mm in height).

- 6.1.3 As illustrated in **Figure 6.1** above, traditional shop fronts are characterised with the use of timber or stone pilasters (or columns) with decorative features. These frame the shop front and separate shop units from the neighbouring unit, and help to integrate the shop front with the whole façade.
- 6.1.4 Stallrisers improve the proportions of a shop front by providing a solid visual base beneath the window display, and provide protection from day-to-day wear and tear of the glazed areas. Whilst stallrisers have decreased in height over time (as display areas in modern shop units have increased), every traditional shop should seek to have a stallriser with the minimum height of 450mm, incorporating a moulded projecting cill to provide a strong junction with the glass. Mosaic, bright or composite tiles, plastic panelling and the use of textured paints are not appropriate – such stallrisers should be either timber or appropriately painted/rendered to match the rest of the façade.
- 6.1.5 Many of the original shop fronts in Tredegar are Victorian or Edwardian in character, as indicated by the large areas of window glazing divided vertically with timber mullions and horizontal transoms. However, some modern refurbishments have removed the original glazing and timber frames, replacing them with

inappropriately designed “unframed” panels of glass – this should be avoided in future.

- 6.1.6 Where different panes of glass meet along the length of shop fronts, particularly at corners, vertical “framing” members (preferably timber) should be used, which contribute to the overall appearance of the area by continuing the tradition of frame and mullion detailing.
- 6.1.7 Recessed doorways are another common character feature, which provide a three-dimensional interest in the street as well as weather protection for customers, and which can easily accommodate access for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Many of the original commercial buildings within Tredegar had such recessed doorways, with Victorian or Edwardian patterned tiling on the floor and sidewalls of the door recess. Such features, where they have survived, are of architectural and historic interest and should be retained.
- 6.1.8 Another modern impact is associated with larger stores occupying more than one building. Often, such stores refurbish the facades of multiple buildings to accommodate one large extended frontage, losing each building’s individuality in the process. If a single shop occupies more than one building, the shop front design should seek to provide a change in fascia level so that individual buildings rather than the whole shop are emphasised – retaining the “rhythm” of building patterns along the streetscape (as illustrated in **Figure 6.2**).
- 6.1.9 The removal of such decorative features, which lend originality and character to the building, should be resisted.
- 6.1.10 Shop fronts make an important contribution to the overall quality of the town. Unfortunately, there are few good examples of traditional shop fronts within the town centre – many of the buildings have shop fronts which have been altered, badly maintained or inappropriately modernised in the past whilst retaining some of the original features (**Photos 6.5 & 6.6**).
- 6.1.11 The Council’s policy is to seek to retain shop fronts of architectural and historic interest, and ensure that shop fronts respect the character of the building to which they are attached. In particular, the Council wish to see existing Victorian, Edwardian and other shop fronts of quality and historic value to be retained or refurbished wherever possible (BGCBC’s **SPG 1 “Design Guidance for Shop fronts”**, pg.2)
- 6.1.12 Well-designed shop fronts make commercial sense as they attract customers into the premises and contribute towards making Tredegar an attractive town centre for shoppers and tourists. The use of quality materials and sensitive design is also beneficial in both appearance and durability, and further respects the historic tradition.



**Fig 6.2:** Where a single shop occupies two buildings, appropriate variations in shop front design coupled with changes in fascia levels can emphasise the buildings’ individuality, thus retaining the traditional “rhythm” of the streetscape.



**Photo 6.5:** Examples of insensitively designed shop fronts on Castle Street – although the shop front on the far right has retained its pilasters, stallriser and angled fascia.



**Photo 6.6:** Similarly on The Circle, there are numerous examples of shop fronts that have retained original features, but which are visually overwhelmed by insensitively designed signage etc....

## 6.2 Advertisements, Fascia & Signs

- 6.2.1 Advertisements are, by their very nature, intended to stand out – their primary function being to attract attention and highlight the goods or services to which they relate. Advertisements on buildings will therefore have an unavoidable impact upon the visual amenity and character of the proposed Conservation Area.
- 6.2.2 Many commercial buildings with Tredegar have retained original shop front features (such as pilasters, stall risers etc...). However, many original fascia boards and signs have been replaced with inappropriately designed internally illuminated fascia signs and illuminated projecting box signs (as shown on **Photos 6.7 & 6.8** below).



**Photo 6.8:** Attractive hand-painted signs (such as those hanging outside the Tredegar Arms and The Olympia Pub) (highlighted in blue) can contribute to the quality of the streetscene, whereas some illuminated projecting signs (highlighted in red) can visually clutter the streetscape

- 6.2.3 Illumination of windows, signs etc... can both enhance the appearance of the street in the evening and contribute to security. However, their design should be carefully considered to relate well to their host building, so as to not affect nearby residential properties or pose a danger to vehicular traffic.
- 6.2.4 In some cases, illumination of a hanging or projecting sign can be appropriate if achieved by discreet lighting cowls fixed to the sign – however, “swan neck” lights can be visually intrusive, particularly on listed buildings, and should be avoided.
- 6.2.5 Some buildings have hanging signs for additional advertising, which can add to the quality of the streetscene if hand-painted and designed to reflect the character of the buildings (as shown in **Photo 6.8**).



**Photo 6.7:** An example of an illuminated fascia sign which visually overwhelms the architectural character of the building, and detracts from the “traditional” historic atmosphere of The Circle – an important focal open space.

**Shop Front Fascia Boards & Signs- Design Guidelines:** The following design guidance relates to proposed works for shop front fascias & signs:

- Where a single business occupies two or more adjoining shops, any new design should ensure that the shop fronts of the individual buildings are respected rather than incorporated into a single design spanning a number of buildings.
- Fascias should not dominate the building in size and scale, and should respect the building as a whole.
- There should be a gap between the top of the fascia and the upper floor window cills.
- Fascia signs should not straddle more than one building – it should be contained within the shop front and its frame, and should not obscure architectural details on the building.
- On a building of historic note, an angled timber fascia is appropriate.
- Console brackets should be hardwood, while the pilasters can be clad in wood, perspex or formica.
- Allowance should be made for the introduction of a roller blind with associated box fitting for shutters (see **Section 6.5** on security shutters).
- Fascia signs should have either hand painted lettering or individually cut perspex lettering.
- Illumination should be subtle and restricted to external spotlights or narrow concealed strip lighting - intermittent or occulting signs are unacceptable, and neon lighting should be avoided in preference for down lights and spotlights.
- Internally illuminated fascia signs and illuminated projecting box signs used in place of traditional fascias should not be encouraged. In some cases, illumination of a hanging or projecting sign can be appropriate if achieved by discreet lighting cowls fixed to the sign – however, “swan neck” lights can be visually intrusive, particularly on listed buildings, and should be avoided.
- Excessive numbers of signs on a building should be discouraged, as this detracts from the intrinsic architectural quality of the building and visually clutters the setting.
- Hanging signs (where deemed appropriate) should be hand-painted and designed to reflect the character of the buildings.

### 6.3 Windows, Roofs & Walls

- 6.3.1 Many of the commercial properties within Tredegar had original sash timber windows, some of which have survived. Such windows should be retained wherever possible.
- 6.3.2 UPVC windows should be generally avoided unless sensitively designed to reflect the character of the building, and horizontal transoms should only be used where necessary, as these can detract from and visually conflict with the vertical emphasis of display windows.
- 6.3.3 Many of the commercial properties along Commercial Street (beyond the proposed Conservation Area boundary) also have distinctive “oriel windows” (i.e. a bay window is also called an oriel window, when it is semi-hexagonal or rectangular in plan, projects from an upper story and is supported by projecting corbels or brackets of stone or wood) (as shown in **Photo 6.9**).
- 6.3.4 These windows are less common, although some have survived, such as on the Castle Hotel (**Photo 6.10**).



**Photo 6.9:** Historic photo of Commercial Street showing predominance of oriel bay windows on upper floors (Source: “*Tredegar: My Town*” by William Clifford Smith, 1982).



**Photo 6.10:** A few examples of oriel bay windows survive on Castle Street (highlighted in blue), notably upon the Castle Hotel.

6.3.5 The predominant characteristic of windows on commercial properties are large glazed display windows on the ground floor, with smaller individual windows (diminishing in size) on the upper floors flush with the building line (as shown in **Photos 6.11, 6.12 & 6.13**).

6.3.6 The reinstatement of oriel bay windows on upper floors should be encouraged where (a) there is a historical precedent for such features on that property, (b) it has been designed to sympathetically fit with the host building; and (c) would not obstruct any architectural detailing or privacy of neighbouring properties.



**Photo 6.13:** The Tredegar Arms has retained its attractive “traditional” patterns of fenestration (usually with glazing bars/transoms and mullions set back within a reveal) and consistent floor-to-ceiling heights (usually in diminishing proportions from the ground storey upwards).

6.3.7 As with other buildings in Tredegar Town Centre, most commercial buildings are stone or brick built often with a painted smooth render finish with slate roofs and original features such as chimney, moulded window surrounds and “quoins” (corner stone detailing) which should be retained and enhanced. (as shown in **Photo 6.14**).



**Photo 6.11:** A ground floor window on the Castle Hotel – ornate grille, timber mullions and transoms – flush with building line.



**Photo 6.12:** Attractive focal window design (Castle Street).



**Photo 6.14:** Many of the historic commercial buildings within Tredegar have retained their slate roofs and chimneys.

### Shop Front Windows, Walls & Roofs - Design Guidelines:

- Original sash and oriel windows should be retained and enhanced wherever possible.
- UPVC windows should be generally avoided unless sensitively designed to reflect the character of the building,
- Horizontal transoms should only be used where necessary, as these can detract from and visually conflict with the vertical emphasis of display windows.
- Blocking up of windows to upper floors should be avoided wherever possible.
- Care should be taken when creating new window openings to ensure that the scale is correct.
- The use of traditional timber sliding sash windows will be encouraged where appropriate.
- Proposals involving the inappropriate use of past styles, such as bow windows and bottled glass will be resisted.
- Oriel windows should be reinstated where a) there is a historical precedent for such features on that property, (b) it has been designed to sympathetically fit with the host building; and (c) would not obstruct any architectural detailing or privacy of neighbouring properties.
- Existing brick or stone walls should be cleaned and repointed wherever possible.
- Moulded window surrounds and “quoins” should be retained and enhanced.
- Render should be smooth finished and painted.
- Heavy stippled finishes and dashes are inappropriate, although granite stone cladding may be deemed appropriate in some circumstances.
- The use of new or second-hand natural slate, or a suitable slate substitute will be encouraged. In general, concrete interlocking or terracotta ridge tiles should be avoided.
- Wherever original chimneys contribute to the character of the area, they should be retained and repaired.

## 6.4 Materials & Colour

- 6.4.1 Many of the commercial historic buildings within Tredegar share a limited palette of building materials, which help to establish a consistent streetscape and contribute to the aesthetic quality.
- 6.4.2 Where these original materials have survived, these tend to comprise good quality, painted hardwood or softwood timber for window glazing bars/mullions/transoms and fascias. Stall risers often having either a smooth rendered and painted finish or plain glazing tiles, stone or brick finish to complement the host building.
- 6.4.3 Many buildings also have attractive coloured render on their external facades. However, pastel shades (**Photo 6.15**) are more appropriate than some of the more “garish”, brighter colours (as shown in **Photo 6.16**).
- 6.4.4 Materials for shop front improvements should complement the age and character of the building. Where possible, shop front facades should use properly maintained softwood and hardwood timber, which can have a long, durable life and will not date as quickly as some more modern materials, although sensitively designed shop fronts in colour-coated aluminium have also been used successfully.
- 6.4.5 The use of modern artificial materials (such as glossy acrylic materials, uncoated aluminum and synthetic tiles) are not appropriate, and should not be used on buildings which have surviving “traditional” architectural features of note.

### Shop Front Materials & Colour - Design Guidelines:

- New shop fronts should reflect a traditional character both in style and materials.
- Painted hardwood or softwood of good quality should be encouraged, although sensitively designed colour-coated aluminium can also be appropriate.
- Stallrisers should have a smooth, rendered and painted finish or plain glazed tiles to match the colour scheme of the shop front.
- Where stallrisers have been previously removed, it is desirable that they are replaced.
- Painted render should use appropriate pastel colours wherever possible.
- Fascia, signs, blinds and other shop front elements should have a co-ordinated colour scheme.



**Photo 6.15:** The attractive pastel blue coloured render is appropriate for the “traditional” character of the area, whilst adding visual interest to the streetscape.



**Photo 6.16:** Although distinctive, this bright maroon coloured render is a little too stark for the character of the area, and is not complemented by the design/colour of the accompanying fascias.

## 6.5 Canopies, Security Shutters / Fixtures

### Blinds & Canopies

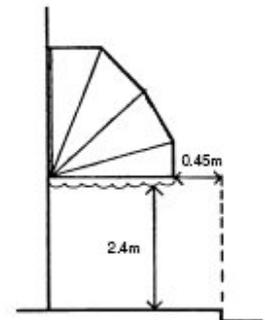
- 6.5.1 Many of the historic commercial buildings within Tredegar have traditionally used canvas flat roller blinds (as shown in **Photo 6.17**), which are appropriate, but which can visually clutter the streetscene.
- 6.5.2 The “flat roller” type of sunblind is a flat projection from the shop front in hardwearing canvas and always fully retractable into a recessed box forming an integral part of the shop front. They are utilised only on shops requiring them for practical purposes (i.e. the protection of goods from sunlight).
- 6.5.3 Dutch-styled retractable “fan” blinds have a curved profile with enclosed ends (as shown in **Figure 6.3**), usually made of cheap plastic, and have no housing as such, often being very untidy when folded. It is very difficult to integrate these canopies in a satisfactory manner into the shop front façade, and more often than not they are merely planted directly onto the frontage. Unlike the traditional flat roller blind, they are not always erected for practical purposes but as an advertisement or eye-catcher and as such their use is not confined to shops and they are not always retracted when not required.
- 6.5.4 Blinds should be sympathetic to the host building in scale, position, design and materials. Too much variety disturbs continuity along streetscapes, and canopies should be limited to those shop fronts that need them.
- 6.5.5 Canopies should not extend sideways further than the shop front over architectural details, and the blind box should not protrude further forwards than the fascia board. Blinds above ground floor level are not acceptable, as they interrupt building elevations.

### Security Shutters & Fixtures

- 6.5.6 Although the need for shutters and security fixtures (such as alarm boxes, CCTV cameras and external lighting) is regrettable as they often detract from the aesthetic quality, they may have the advantage of protecting a shop front or recessed entrance from vandalism at night. However, it is essential that such features are sensitively designed.
- 6.5.7 Fully encased metal external “roller” shutter blinds with external housing boxes often left in a raw un-galvanised metal finish (as shown in **Photo 6.18**), give a dead appearance at night-time and visually detract from the aesthetic quality of the streetscape. As break-ins to properties usually occur from the rear, solid shutters can also have the effect of concealing the activities of intruders in a shop from general view.
- 6.5.8 Shutters can, however, be successfully incorporated if sensitively designed and integrated into the overall design of the shop front. The shutter box housing should be concealed behind the fascia so



**Photo 6.17:** Traditional flat roller blinds were commonly used along Commercial Street in the late 19th Century (Source: “*Tredegar: My Town*” by William Clifford)



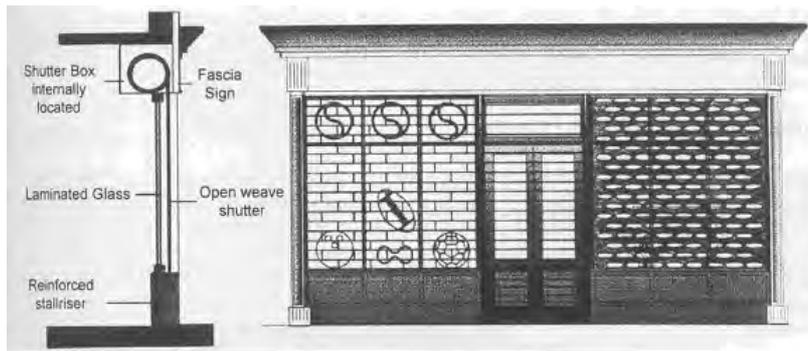
**Figure 6.3:** Dutch-style retractable “fan” blinds are not suitable, as they hide architectural details and interrupt building elevations.



**Photo 6.18:** This bad example on Castle Street (showing a fully encased roller shutter with external housing box left in “raw” galvanised metal finish) is visually unattractive.

that no part of the shutter is visible when retracted. The appearance of shutters can be improved by colour coating to match the shop front.

- 6.5.9 Internal “open weave” and “perforated” retractable shutters are preferred (as shown in **Figure 6.4**), located immediately behind the shop window, coated in a complementary colour. They allow window-shopping to continue at night and at weekends. Open-styled mesh or lattice/brick board grilles (as shown in **Photo 6.19**) must be high quality, and sympathetically designed and painted to complement the building.



**Figure 6.4:** Left – Diagram showing an appropriate internally mounted shutter box; and Right - Illustrations of three types of acceptable internal “open weave” retractable shutters or grilles (Source: Mansfield Council’s “*Shop Front Security Design Guidance*”, 1994).

- 6.5.10 Laminated glass provides security without affecting the appearance of a property, and as such, should be prioritised over the use of shutters. Small paned windows are less of a temptation to wilful damage than large sheets of plate glass, and cheaper to replace. Therefore property owners should be encouraged to build or alter shop fronts to include windows divided by mullions into smaller panes wherever possible.



**Photo 6.19:** An example of a poor quality open lattice-styled grille on Castle Street – despite its poor quality, it is better than a fully enclosed roller shutter as it opens up the window display.

### Shop Front Canopies, Security Fixtures & Access - Design Guidelines:

- Painted hardwood or softwood of good quality should be encouraged, although sensitively designed colour-coated aluminium can also be appropriate.
- Stallrisers should have a smooth, rendered and painted finish or plain glazed tiles to match the colour scheme of the shop front.
- Where stallrisers have been previously removed, it is desirable that they are replaced.
- Painted render should use appropriate pastel colours wherever possible.
- Fascia, signs, blinds and other shop front elements should have a co-ordinated colour scheme.
- The addition of security fixtures will normally only be permitted where the fixtures are sympathetic to overall design of the façade of the host building. This will include:
  - The covering of only glazed areas and/or doorways where shutters or grilles are employed, ensuring that architectural features such as fascias, stallrisers and pilasters remain visible when shutters are in place;
  - The integration of housing boxes, guide rails and/or other fixtures and fittings, where they are employed, as part of the façade details; and
  - The colour co-ordination of security fixtures and fittings so as to be harmonious with the overall scheme for the shop front.
- The Council favours the use of internal shutters and laminated glass etc...as security measures instead of external shutters.
- Where external shutters are unavoidable, open styled “mesh” shutters are preferred to the use of solid shutters, and will only be permitted where the security fixture has been designed to be sympathetic to the host building –for example:
  - The shutter, housing box and guide rails are colour co-ordinated so that they match the façade of the building;
  - The shutter itself is of an open “mesh” or “lattice” type; the housing box and guide rails are located so as to be as unobtrusive as possible; and
  - The shutter (where possible) only covers glazed areas and/or doorways.

## 7 Design Guidance for the Public Realm

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 This section of the Design Guide provides guidance for the design, implementation, management and maintenance of “public realm” elements.
- 7.1.2 The “public realm” is the combination of spaces between buildings, including streets, public rights of way, open spaces, street furniture (such as lighting and signage columns, seats, litter bins etc...), and public art and landscape features.
- 7.1.3 The quality of the public realm within any Conservation Area is very important, as it defines not only the settlement’s network of streets, spaces and important views, but also determines how well residents and visitors experience the area.
- 7.1.4 Numerous national and local Design Guides for improving the quality of the public realm have been published by The Design Commission for Wales (DCfW), the Welsh Development Agency, the National Assembly, CABE (the English equivalent of the DCfW) and The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This includes **“Paving the Way: The Quality of Our Streets”** (ODPM, 2000), which identifies the following six key objectives for successful public realms:
- Comfortable and safe for pedestrians and the disabled;
  - A street designed to accommodate all functions, not dominated by any one function;
  - Visually simple and free of clutter – regardless of whether a street is a straight forward or complex space, what matters is the simplicity and clarity of its paving, street furniture, lighting and landscape design;
  - Well cared for, where utilities or “extraneous” advertising are subordinate to all other street functions;
  - Sympathetic to local character and activity context, in design and detail; and
  - Making appropriate ordered provision for access, delivery and storage of vehicles.

## 7.2 Paving & Carriageway Materials

### Current Design Concerns

7.2.1 Typically, the main historic commercial streets within Tredegar's town centre (such as Commercial Street, Castle Street, The Circle and Morgan Street) have a very straightforward public realm of flagged footpaths within granite kerbs flanking tarmac roads constructed to standard engineering specifications (as shown in **Photo 7.1**). This consistent selection of local materials creates visual unity along these streetscapes, albeit these are somewhat marred by patches of broken flagstones, insensitive patched tarmac and the physical division between Castle Street and Commercial Street by the main through-route across Queen Victoria Street (**Photo 7.2**).



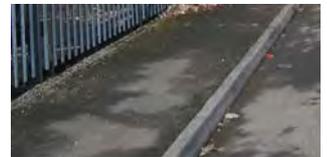
**Photo 7.1:** Historic streetscapes such as along Castle Street have "traditional" granite flagged paving and granite setts.

7.2.2 However, this visual unity "breaks down" along the secondary streets (such as Lower Coronation Street and Upper Salisbury Street) where non-natural materials have been used, such as standard bound tarmac surfacing & paving (as shown in **Photo 7.3**) and terracotta-coloured standard tactile paving (as shown in **Photo 7.4**).

7.2.3 Recent resurfacing improvements along Castle Street, The Circle and Morgan Street (as shown in **Photo 7.5** below) have helped to visually unify these streets somewhat, but the treatment has not been extended northward to Queen Victoria Street and Commercial Street or southwards along Morgan Street to the Promenade D'Orvault, thus the town centre remains physically "divided".



**Photo 7.2:** The "visual unity" of town centre is divided by the intersection of Queen Victoria Street separating Castle Street, & Commercial Street.



**Photo 7.3:** The use of non-natural paving materials, such as tarmac, along such streets as Shop Row.



**Photo 7.4:** The "traditional" granite flagged pavements are often interrupted by the use of standard "terracotta" tactile paving at pedestrian crossings.

**Photos 7.5 (Left):** Recent streetscape improvements along Castle Street (Top Left - A), The Circle (Top Right - B) and parts of Morgan Street (Bottom Left -C) have helped visually unify these streets. As shown in Photo 5-5 (B), (bottom right corner), there is a tendency in designing paved areas to incorporate too many changes of scale, pattern and colour. The result is usually visual confusion, which can pose dangers for pedestrians and motorists alike. The safest policy, and one that accords with Welsh tradition, is to keep things bold, clear, and simple.

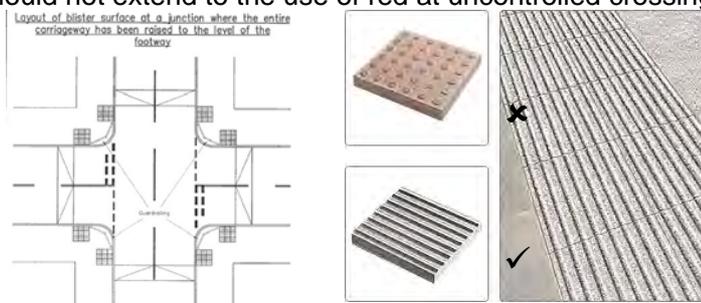
7.2.4 The paving treatment along this area has also not been entirely successfully – the use of various paving slabs and setts of different sizes and shapes visually clutters the streetscapes (as shown in **Photo 7.5 (B)** previous page), and the lack of appropriate traffic calming measures mean that these streets still don't function properly as “pedestrian prioritised” areas - traffic continues to speed along these routes, with the Clock Tower acting as an effective traffic island. This has resulted in the Clock Tower effectively becoming a traffic island with little attempt to enable pedestrians to easily navigate to this focal feature (as shown in **Photo 7.6**).



**Photo 7.6:** The recent streetscape improvements have tried to establish a pedestrian prioritised area (i.e. a low speed environment without the need for dedicated pedestrian crossing points), but in practice this has had little effect on calming speeding traffic speeds, leading to potential pedestrians/vehicular conflict at junctions (as shown above).

7.2.5 In order to improve the aesthetic quality of streetscapes, and help unify Castle Street with Commercial Street, there is a clear need for further investment in more appropriately designed streetscape improvements throughout the town centre. This should start with balancing the historic character of the area with modern functional needs and design standards (i.e. using the most functionally and aesthetically appropriate natural materials to improve the quality of the public realm, in preference to the rigid use of standard detailing).

7.2.6 With regard to tactile paving (as illustrated in **Figure 7.1**), where the blister surface is provided at crossing points in the vicinity of a listed building, some relaxation of the colour requirements may be acceptable. In these limited circumstances only, the tactile surface should be provided in a colour, which is in keeping with the surrounding material (i.e. grey granite). However, this relaxation should not extend to the use of red at uncontrolled crossing points.



**Figure 7.1:** Diagram illustrating the appropriate layout of blister surfaces at a raised junction, and “natural stone” tactile paving products available from Marshalls.

7.2.7 The installation of poorly laid cobbles or setts can result in discomfort to some road users, and appropriately designed/coloured

special features (i.e. dropped kerbs, tactile surfaces etc...), should be provided at pedestrian crossing points (i.e. grey materials should be used rather than buff or pink, and crossing points should be designed to avoid the tactile surfaces forming awkward geometrical shapes, which can detract from the appearance of historic streets).

7.2.8 Providing small element pavers within the highway can also be expensive, with high maintenance costs. Consequently, small element pavers should only be provided on “table-top” pedestrian crossing facilities or significant public spaces, such as along Morgan Street/The Circle/Castle Street/Commercial Street, as part of streetscape improvements to unify the town centre and make these low traffic volume/pedestrian prioritised environments.

7.2.9 With regard to traffic calming, CADW has issued special guidance for “**Traffic Management In Historic Areas**”, which states that:

*“Historic areas can often be improved by the partial or total removal of traffic, through pedestrianisation or the use of shared surfaces. However, in historic areas the traditional form and appearance of the street remains vitally important. The traditional distinction between the carriageway and the footway may be important both visually and historically, and this may counsel against the adoption of a single wall-to-wall surfacing. An informed analysis of the existing situation will show whether traditional kerb lines and changes in level should be retained”.*

7.2.10 The guidance therefore recommends that the following basic principles should be followed when designing traffic calming:

- Develop an understanding of the special qualities of the place and depart as little as possible from the traditional form of the streets and their materials;
- Respect existing/established traditional materials & detailing;
- Review existing signing and consider scope for rationalization;
- Anticipate and minimize new signing requirements at the earliest design stage;
- Limit formal designs to formal spaces;
- Provide for maintenance and invest in quality.

7.2.11 A key issue for Tredegar Town Centre is to unite the town centre more effectively by improving traffic calming and streetscape design along Commercial Street, Castle Street, The Circle and Morgan Street.

7.2.12 One possible solution is to create a one-way low pedestrian prioritised, low-speed “shared surface” area along these streets (as illustrated in **Figure 7.2** overleaf), rather than total pedestrianisation, which can adversely affect local businesses.

Cadw's “Traffic Management in Historic Areas” (2003) is available in PDF format from CADW's website:  
[www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)



**Figure 7.2:** An example of a “shared surface” within a town centre, with subtle changes in the colour/sizing/alignment of paving to denote vehicular/pedestrian routes, and the use of soft landscaping etc... as “natural” traffic calming (Source: <http://www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk/gallery.htm>)

7.2.13 Since pedestrians and drivers share the same surface, it would be essential to make all road users aware of the separate and distinctive nature of this “shared surface” environment, not only with the presence of appropriately designed traffic calming measures (i.e. use of soft landscaping; on-street parking bays; pedestrian crossing points; bollards etc...), but also by the use of subtle changes in colour/sizing/alignment of paving and carriageway surfacing materials. These roads should be constructed using block pavements, or other coloured/textured materials to the approval of the Highway Authority.

7.2.14 **Figure 7.3** illustrates how pedestrian junctions can be simplified to improve aesthetic quality without compromising highway safety.



**Figure 7.3:** Example of how a pedestrian junction (left) can be simplified and redesigned to respect and respond to its context (Holland Park Junction, Kensington High Street, London (Before and After) – Source: <http://www.hamilton-baillie.co.uk/gallery.htm>)

**Paving/Carriageway Materials- Design Guidelines:**

- High quality and appropriate materials should be used throughout the town centre (i.e. natural stone edge treatments for paving, kerbs, channels etc...) with existing natural stone treatments retained and enhanced, and the appropriate replacement of inappropriate materials (i.e. tarmacadam).
- Existing kerb alignments should be retained to protect the established character of both primary and minor streets – however, opportunities for marginal widening of footways should be considered where appropriate, with parking and loading bays accommodated within carriageways avoiding kerb build outs;
- Primary routes (such as Morgan Street, The Circle, Castle Street, Queen Victoria Street junction and Commercial Street) should have:
  - Large granite or natural stone flagstone slabs of random length and variety of course widths (400-900mm) with wide-top granite kerbs (300mm width x random length) (i.e. silver grey, buff or blue grey granite is a local hardwearing natural paving material which is commonly used for highway and paving setts due to its inherent strength) (Figure 7.4) or relay existing natural materials where undamaged and consistent;
  - Carriageways should either comprise appropriately designed small unit granite setts (150-200mm width x random length in the range 275-500mm) or asphalt with coated granite chippings rather than tarmacadam;
  - Drainage channels should also be granite setts with cast iron drainage gates, with down pipe pavement drains in raised kerb areas;
  - Restricted use of road marking which can visually overwhelm the aesthetic quality of streetscapes;
  - Where pre-cast concrete quadrants, droppers, crossing kerbs, angles, channels, paving and bollards are used, these should accord British Standard 7263, and where possible should reflect the character of the Conservation Area (i.e. Marshalls “Conservation” concrete products with granite-coating as shown in Figure 7.5).
- Secondary/minor streets (such as Upper Salisbury Street, Market Street, Iron Row, Bridge Street, Lower Coronation Street & Shop Row) should include:
  - Carriageways should be granite setts (100-150mm width x random length) or asphalt with coated granite, depending on exiting treatment/context;
  - Cobblestones may be historically appropriate along laneways, but can restrict access for those with restricted mobility and thus should be avoided;
  - Footpaths should comprise granite or natural stone slabs (variety of course widths between 450mm-700m x random length) with granite kerbs (150mm wide x random length) or relay existing natural materials where undamaged and consistent;
  - Drainage channels should also be granite setts with cast iron drainage gates, with down pipe pavement drains in raised kerb areas.
- For tactile paving, where the blister surface is provided at crossing points in the vicinity of a listed building, the tactile surface should be provided in a colour which is in keeping with the surrounding material (i.e. silver or blue grey to match adjacent granite or natural stone paving).
- Traffic calming schemes should be designed to incorporate features which do not diminish or detract from the visual amenity or character of the area, (i.e. historical precedent features such as tight kerb radii, narrow carriageways, cobbled and setted streets and traditional gateways or pinch-points should be replicated (where appropriate) in new development design and streetscape improvement projects throughout the town centre).



**Figure 7.4:** Granite “setts” (Marshalls).



**Figure 7.5:** Marshalls’ “Conservation” paving is a high quality, value for money and durable enhanced concrete product, due to its silver-grey colour which complements the existing natural granite stone within Tredegar.

Subtle changes in sett alignment/sizes/colour can help differentiate between pedestrian footways & carriageways in “shared surface” areas.

### 7.3 Street Furniture

#### Current Design Concerns:

- 7.3.1 The recent streetscape improvements within the town centre have included the provision of “street furniture” of contrasting, inconsistent styles.
- 7.3.2 Modern painted aluminium benches (as shown in **Photo 7.7**) sit alongside “Victoriana” heritage-styled street furniture (including black and gold painted cast iron lamp standards with some small hanging baskets, tree grilles and litter bins – as shown in **Photo 7.8**). Beyond the main commercial area, the abundant use of standard Council proprietary metallic lighting and services equipment does not visually complement the historic character of the town centre (**Photo 7.9**).



**Photo 7.7:** A modern designed painted aluminium bench in The Circle, which contrasts in character with the “Victoriana” lighting columns and signage posts nearby (**Photo 7.8**)

- 7.3.3 Where a prominent public space merits the procurement of a one-off design or customised “off the peg” designs, consideration should be paid to opportunities to work in partnership with CBAT and other Arts Trusts to develop unique, functional public art features (i.e. Ebbw Vale’s town centre improvement project has included using local architectural glass artist Martin Donlin to design a coloured glass canopy, shown in **Figure 7.6** to front the town’s Market Hall offices as well as a number of shops.
- 7.3.4 Street furniture should use a limited palette of quality materials appropriate to the historic and architectural character of the area, with consideration paid to the suitability of materials, their resistance to vandalism and damage, the ease of repair and maintenance requirements (i.e. natural stone, painted aluminium or cast iron metal, timber etc...). It should also be placed to respect pedestrian movement and the needs of the disabled, and to avoid visual clutter. Wherever possible, signage and lighting columns should be combined or wall mounted, control boxes and overhead wiring placed underground or discretely placed, and street furniture (benches, lighting, litter bins etc..) should be placed in relation to the effect upon public spaces. Existing street furniture should be assessed as part of a full public realm study audit, and those items of interest/value should be retained or relocated if appropriate.



**Photo 7.8:** Most of the lighting and signage columns along Castle Street, Morgan Street & The Circle are “Victoriana” in design.



**Photo 7.9:** Unattractive signage, lighting and telephone wire columns along Iron Row/Lower Coronation Street detract from the visual quality of the streetscape.



**Figure 7.6:** Funded by the WDA in partnership with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and commissioned through CBAT: The Arts & Regeneration Agency, the Martin Donlin-designed canopy features a glass design chosen to reflect the natural forms inspired by Ebbw Vale landscape and heritage.

**Street Furniture Materials- Design Guidelines:**

**Street Furniture:**

- A co-ordinated range of high quality heritage-style OR contemporary high street furniture, lighting & public art should be developed which reflects and respects the character of the town centre, subject to the preparation of a full public realm design project and audit of existing features (examples are shown in **Figure 7.7**).
- Street furniture should use a limited palette of quality materials appropriate to the historic and architectural character of the town centre, with consideration paid to the suitability of materials, their resistance to vandalism and damage, the ease of repair and maintenance requirements (i.e. natural stone, painted aluminium or cast iron metal (BS EN1561.1997 including recycled options) hardwood timber etc...).
- Wherever possible, signage and lighting columns should be combined or wall mounted, control boxes and overhead wiring placed underground of discretely placed, and street furniture (benches, lighting, litter bins etc..) should be placed in relation to the effect upon public spaces.



**Figure 7.7:** Examples of “heritage” styled cast iron street furniture items (often used “as standard” in Conservation Areas), and similar contemporary items using appropriate materials (timber, stone, painted metal), which could be used as an alternative to pastiche designs. However, it is essential to adopt a consistent style (not a mix of heritage and contemporary styles).(Source:www.marshals.co.uk)

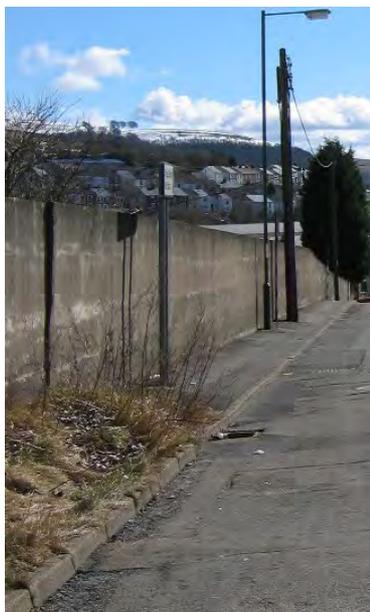
## 7.4 Boundary Walls:

- 7.4.1 There are a number of attractive historic boundary stone walls within Tredegar, such as the wall outside the Queens Square cottages (as shown in **Photo 7.10**) and the wall running from the Castle Street Congregational Church.

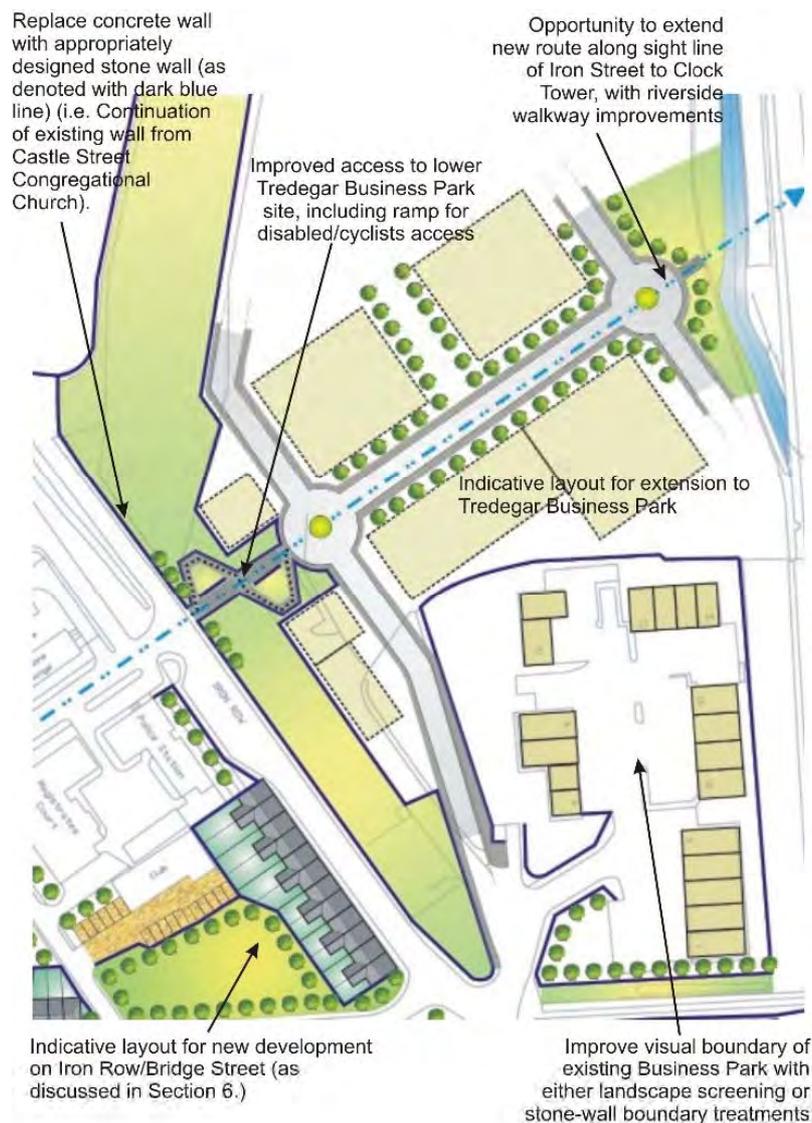


**Photo 7.10:** The stone wall outside the Queen's Square cottages is an attractive character feature, and should be appropriately replicated for all stone wall boundaries in the town centre.

- 7.4.2 However, the concrete wall along Iron Row (as shown in **Photo 7.11**) denotes a large change in level between the town centre and the lower colliery site. This unattractive wall is a visual and physical barrier, and should be replaced with an appropriately designed stone wall (similar to that shown in **Photo 7.10**), with suitable access for pedestrians and cyclists to access the lower site which it is understood will be expanded as part of the Tredegar Business Park (as illustrated in **Figure 7.8** overleaf).



**Photo 7.11:** The unattractive concrete wall along Iron Row visually and physically separates the town centre from the lower colliery site and the Sirhowy river. As this area is to be developed, as part of the Tredegar Business Park, there is an opportunity to replace this wall with an appropriately designed stonewall as illustrated in Photo 7.10.



**Figure 7.8:** Indicative layout for expanded Tredegar Business Park, illustrating how stone-wall boundary treatments could extend from the Castle Street Congregation Church, with new routes orientated along sight line of Iron Street/Clock Tower with new pedestrian access connection and proposed riverside walkway.

**Boundary Walls- Design Guidelines:**

- Wherever possible, boundary walls clad with appropriate local stone (i.e. granite, blue lias limestone, Portland Stone etc...) or soft landscaping should be provided to screen public/private areas.
- The concrete wall running along Iron Row should be replaced with an appropriately designed stone wall, with a new pedestrian access route provided down to the expanding Tredegar Business Park orientated along the sight-line of Iron Street to the Clock Tower – as shown in **Figure 7.8**.

## 7.5 Landscaping & Protected Trees

- 7.5.1 Trees are valued features within most towns, and make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. Street trees provide a number of benefits, including helping to filter pollution, retain air humidity, provide shelter and shade, screen prevailing winds, reduce eddy effects, mitigate building heat loss, and screen unsightly buildings and areas.
- 7.5.2 Unfortunately, trees are no longer a significant feature within Tredegar's town centre. This is partly due to the narrow street widths and the unfortunate removal of some trees along Castle Street etc...to make way for CCTV cameras as part of recent streetscape improvements. Where trees still exist, these are either immature "street tree" specimens (**Photo 7.12**) or scrub planting on wasteland (**Photo 7.13**). However, some attractive mature trees have grown on the "pocket park" site (formerly used for terraced development) on Bridge Street, but none are of high ecological or amenity value (**Photo 7.14**).
- 7.5.3 Trees should be retained and enhanced wherever possible, with consideration paid to restoring planting back along Castle Street and Morgan Street wherever deemed appropriate.



**Photo 7.12:** (Example – Outside the Library on The Circle) Many of the trees within Tredegar are immature "street tree" specimens, which currently do not contribute visually to the quality of the streetscape.



**Photo 7.13:** (Example – Lower Coronation Street) Many of the cleared sites within Tredegar which have been left "open" have become wastelands with unattractive scrub planting.



**Photo 7.14:** The "Pocket Park" on Iron Row has a number of attractive semi-mature trees, but none are of high amenity or ecological value. The location and topography of the site also mean it doesn't function well as a useable park area.



## 8 Design Guidance for Regeneration Sites

- 8.1.1 Two regeneration sites have been identified within Tredegar – former terraced housing sites which were demolished during the 1960s slum clearance programme, and which have been left as open wasteland and informal car park areas (as shown in **Photos 8.1 & 8.2**). Both sites in their current condition visually detract from the quality of the area.



**Photo 8.1:** The cleared terrace site on Upper Salisbury Street is currently used for car parking, with scrub planting to the rear.



**Photo 8-2:** Few of the original buildings on Lower Coronation Street have survived – the cleared sites are currently used for car parking or have scrub planting on waste ground.

- 8.1.2 In the likely event that these sites are redeveloped, the following design guidance should be taken into consideration by potential developers and the Council when determining future development proposals for the sites.

Consideration has been paid to the views expressed within the “**Tredegar Southern Area Regeneration Study & Masterplan**” (produced by Powell Dobson in 2003 on behalf of BGCBC).

- 8.1.3 Powell Dobson undertook consultations with various residential developers in 2003 to gauge market interest in the identified regeneration sites. This confirmed that most developers would have

concentrated upon providing detached housing rather than terraced properties. However, most developers broadly support the suggestion of providing terraced “townhouses” with integrated undercroft or rear parking, as this would mark a new market niche in Tredegar and would support restoring the original urban grain element whilst meeting market demand for larger house units.

- 8.1.4 The following masterplan layouts (as shown in **Figures 8.1 - 8.3**) illustrate indicative layouts for development on both sites, which would help restore the original building frontages and improve the quality of streetscapes within these areas.
- 8.1.5 The architectural design and detailing of any new development on these sites (including improvements to the public realm) should follow the recommended design guidance outlined in **Chapter 5** and **Chapter 7**.





**Figure 8.2:** Indicative masterplan layout for new development on the Upper Salisbury Street Regeneration Site, showing how terraced “town house” development could re-establish the original building line, with parking accommodated within a rear courtyard, and the need for stone wall boundaries to define public/private spaces to the rear of Castle Street properties. The two buildings on the corner of Market Street/Upper Salisbury Street should also be redeveloped, retaining as much of the original buildings’ detailing as possible.



**Figure 8.3:** Indicative masterplan layout for new development on the Lower Coronation Street/Bridge Street/Iron Row area. Similar to the proposals for Upper Salisbury Street, the development of terraced “town houses” could re-establish the original plot building lines. Where new development cannot be accommodated due to narrow plot widths etc... consideration should be paid to the provision of defining stone walls and planting. Such secondary streets should be designed as “home zones”.

The “pocket park” should either be levelled and better landscaped to make it more functional, or should be redeveloped with terraced development, with parking accommodated to the rear or via “undercroft” facilities. Consideration should also be paid to the opportunity to transform the land to the rear of the Siloh Chapel into another “pocket park area”, as this site is unlikely to be redeveloped due to its former use as a cemetery – the headstones (currently stacked in a corner) should be sensitively restored.

The former “Truck Shop” requires urgent restoration works (currently underway) and could be redeveloped as for either residential or retailing use.

The visually unattractive fencing around the surgery and existing Business Park facilities should be replaced with appropriately design stonewalls and landscape screening, and a new prominent landmark building should be constructed on the current vacant site on the Promenade D’Orvault.

## 9 Conclusions & Recommendations

### 9.1 Summary

- 9.1.1 The recommendations put forward in this report do not aim to inhibit development within Tredegar Town Centre, but to encourage better control of change within a newly created Conservation Area, thus ensuring the vitality of the town centre whilst also retaining and enhancing its historic and architectural character.
- 9.1.2 There are a number of advantages to owning a property in a Conservation Area, including enhanced prices of period property as well as the many economic and tourism benefits from living in an attractive historic setting. Preventing further erosion and enhancing the historic assets of the proposed Tredegar Conservation Area could act as a further catalyst in regenerating the town centre, to the benefit of all both now and in the future.
- 9.1.3 Furthermore, owners of historic properties within Conservation Areas may be eligible for grants for the repair of historic buildings from Cadw, Welsh Historic Monuments. This, together with the effective utilisation of other sources of funding (such as establishing a Town Centre Improvement Scheme with Cadw) could help ensure this report's recommendations are implemented sooner rather than later.
- 9.1.4 English Heritage advises that the preparation of Conservation Appraisal documents such as this report should not be seen as an end in itself, but regarded as the first step in a dynamic process to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of a designated Conservation Area.
- 9.1.5 In order to ensure the recommendations of this report are carried forward, it is recommended that the following steps should be pursued by BGCBC.

### 9.2 Adopt a Tredegar Town Centre Conservation Area

- 9.2.1 The proposed Conservation Area boundary (as recommended in **Chapter 3** of this report) should be formally adopted by the Council.
- 9.2.2 Prior to this, relevant local stakeholder representatives (including local property owners, residents associations, ward councillors etc...) should be consulted to ascertain their views, address any concerns, and hopefully gain their support for the proposal.
- 9.2.3 Recommendations for a full consultation programme are outlined within **Section 9.4**.

### 9.3 Adopt this report as supplementary planning guidance

- 9.3.1 The most effective way to enhance a newly created Conservation Area is to ensure that all proposals for repair/maintenance, alterations, extensions or new development within the Conservation Area are based upon the recommendations of this report.
- 9.3.2 BGCBC could use this report as a consistent point of reference when determining planning or other types of consent applications.
- 9.3.3 To give the recommendations of this report sufficient statutory weight, this report would need to be formally adopted as a supplementary planning document (SPD) to support the Adopted UDP and emerging Local Development Framework.
- 9.3.4 The Council could also illustrate their commitment to this report and its recommendations by ensuring that it is used as a basis for all corporate initiatives within any newly created Conservation Area, including any future streetscape or regeneration projects in Tredegar.

### 9.4 Public Consultation & Improving Local Knowledge

- 9.4.1 In order for this report to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance, the draft report would need to be subject to public consultation.
- 9.4.2 To do this, the Council could make copies of this draft report available at both their offices, the Tredegar Library and on the Council's website.
- 9.4.3 Letters and notices within public newspapers could then be issued to key relevant stakeholders (i.e. local property owners, residents associations, ward councillors etc...), informing them where they can view the draft report and informing them that they have six weeks to submit their comments to the Council.
- 9.4.4 For auditing purposes, it would also be advisable for the Council to keep a record of what comments have been made by which parties, and how the draft report will be amended to reflect these comments. The resulting record could then be made available to the public via the Council's website and newspaper articles.
- 9.4.5 Any public consultation programme could also be used to improve local historic knowledge and communications with local residents groups and schools.

### 9.5 Utilising funding opportunities more effectively

- 9.5.1 Although the Planning Act 1990 (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to prepare a scheme of enhancement for a Conservation Area, there is no identified budget or mechanism for its achievement. This means that enhancement can only be achieved in co-operation with other

Service Areas within the Council or in partnership with the community or other public bodies.

9.5.2 The proposed creation of the Conservation Area raises opportunities to reassess funding programmes to support the conservation objectives outlined within this report. The following opportunities are:

- The management and maintenance of any Council owned properties, parks and gardens;
- The promotion of an understanding of the cultural and historic significance of Tredegar Town Centre through links with schools, libraries and community groups, and the erection of appropriately designed and sited interpretive signage, plaques and public art works;
- Through the adoption of grant-aided programmes (i.e. town centre improvement grants etc...) to restore derelict properties (particularly listed buildings), encouraging consistency in appropriately designed shop front and public realm improvements. This should involve working in close partnership with Cadw and other key stakeholders.
- Through the effective management of existing Council budgets for example in:
  - Housing repair grants;
  - Grant-aid to improve energy efficiency in homes;
  - Traffic management and highway improvement/repair programmes; and
  - Maintenance and enhancement programmes for local parks.
- Through the encouragement and support of local initiatives to enhance and strengthen local shops and community services with the Conservation Area – in partnership with the local Chamber of Commerce and the local community.

### 9.6 Potential Town Centre Improvement Schemes

9.6.1 One way in which this might be achieved is to ensure that properties within the Conservation Area benefit from any future relevant grant programmes (such as the Cadw Town Scheme Partnership, which could involve the Council, local residents and Cadw working in partnership to support the repair and restoration of original features within the Tredegar Town Centre Conservation Area.

9.6.2 Tredegar Town Centre would also benefit from a full public realm study (including an appraisal of existing street furniture and paving quality and development of streetscape enhancement proposals for primary routes (such as Castle Street/Commercial Street) and secondary streets (such as Lower Coronation Street and Upper Salisbury Road). This should involve relevant BGCBC Council departments and service agencies involved in street furniture/utility provision, to agree a common approach to the provision and long-term maintenance of street furniture and public realm paving.

## Bibliography

Details of the Listed Buildings, historic records and planning policy documents referred to within this report may be obtained from:

- BGCBC 's Municipal Offices, Civic Centre, Ebbw Vale, NP23 6XB (Tel: 01495 350555);
- Cadw, Welsh Assembly Government, Plas Carew Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff, CF15 7QQ (Tel: 01443 33 6000; Fax: 01443 33 6001; E-mail: Cadw@Wales.gsi.gov.uk); or the
- National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1NA, (Tel: 029 20 825111).

Documents taken into consideration during the preparation of this report are listed as follows:

### **Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Documents:**

- “**Advertisement Consent**” (BGCBC Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- “**Design Guidance for Shop fronts**” (BGCBC Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- “**Residential Extensions**” (BGCBC Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- “**Security Fixtures**” (BGCBC Supplementary Planning Guidance)
- “**Tredegar Southern Area Regeneration Study & Masterplan**” (Powell Dobson on behalf of BGCBC, 2003).

Other “best practice” guidance documents used for this report include:

- “**By Design**” (ODPM, 2000)
- **Circular 61/96 “Planning and the Historic Environment: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas**” (Welsh Office, 1996)
- “**Starting to Live Differently**” (WDA, March 2004)
- “**Stratford Upon Avon Design Guide**” (Stratford Upon Avon Council, 1999).
- “**The Urban Design Compendium**” (English Partnerships, 2000)