

Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme

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Design & Access Statement

(incl Heritage Impact Assessment)

3-4 High Street, Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil

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CONTENTS

01 *introduction*

02 *townscape heritage initiative & the brief*

03 *site & context*

04 *condition of existing buildings*

05 *proposed alterations & repairs*

06 *heritage impact*

07 *access*

08 *reference material*

01 introduction

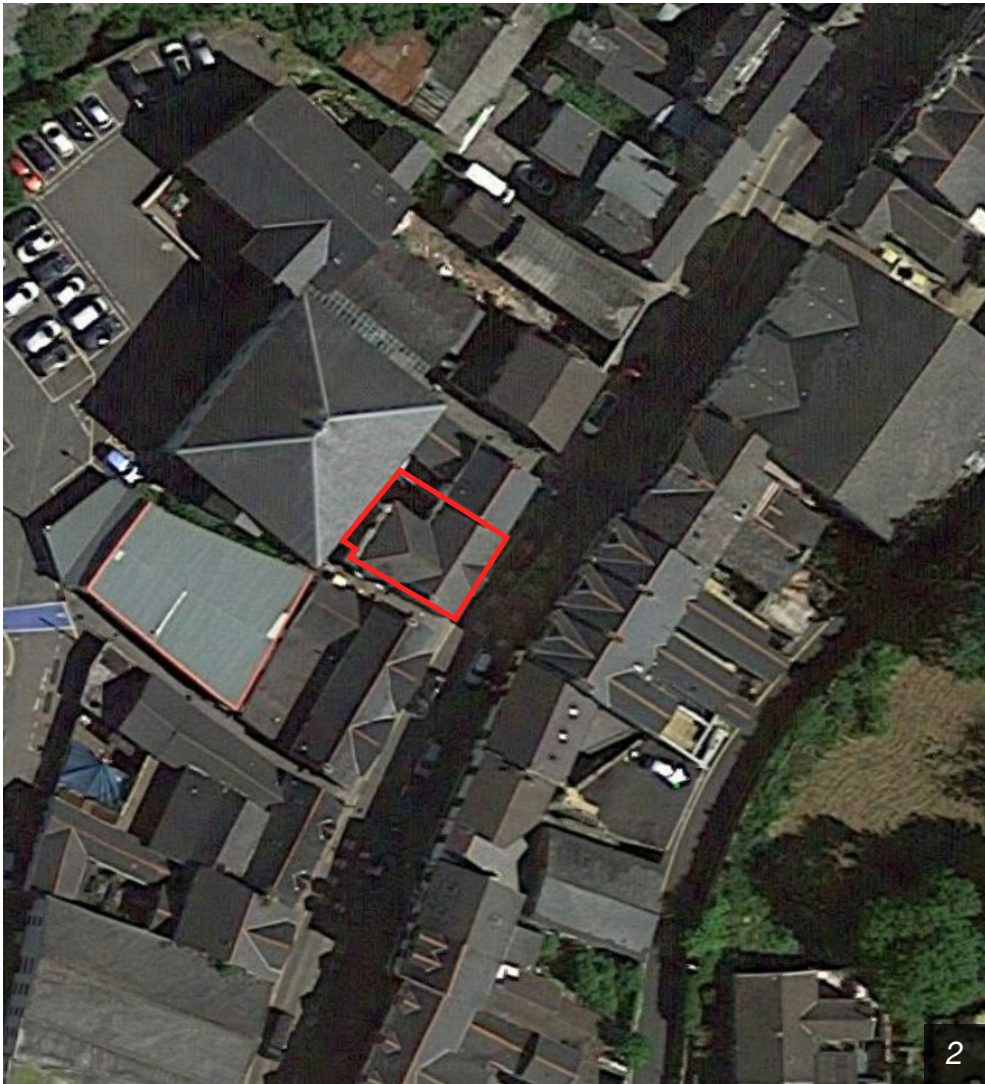
3-4 High Street lies within the Pontmorlais area at the northern end of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area. The character area of Pontmorlais described in the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Appraisal (June 2009) is concentrated around the Pontmorlais High Street which is a continuation of what is now the more commercial end of the High Street to the south.

The whole of the town centre area was developed during the late 18th and early 19th century as a result of rapid industrial development and population growth. The Pontmorlais area played an important strategic role in the expanding areas of Merthyr, situated as it was between the industrial hubs of Penydarren and Dowlais with the town centre to the south.

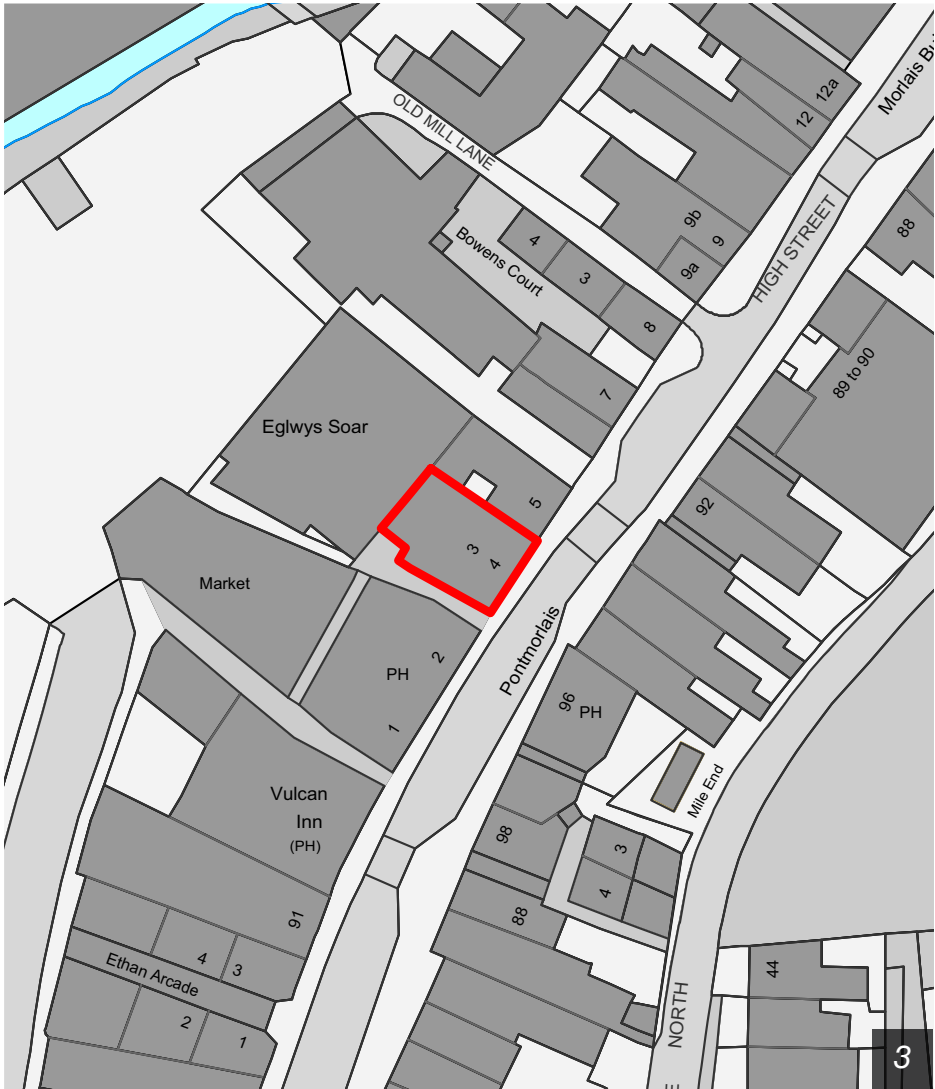
The importance of the area during these growth years is reflected in the rich variety of architectural styles that developed during the late 18th, 19th and into the early 20th century, all representative of the significant investment made in the area during this period.

The various uses accommodated in the buildings: commercial, civic, social and spiritual also reflect the vibrancy of the area during this era. The decline of the iron and steel industries has inevitably impacted on employment opportunities and hence investment in the area. This, together with inappropriate 20th century development and changes in the way consumers use the high street have further contributed to the slow erosion of the fabric of the Pontmorlais area.

However, a substantial variety of buildings do still survive within the Pontmorlais area and although a number of buildings are run down through lack of investment and beneficial use or have suffered from inappropriate alterations over time, the character of the area is still evident and is an important asset for Merthyr Tydfil.



3-4 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil



- 1. Historical view - buildings outlined in red
- 2. Google satellite view - site outlined in red
- 3. OS extract with site area outlined in red

02 townscape heritage initiative & the brief

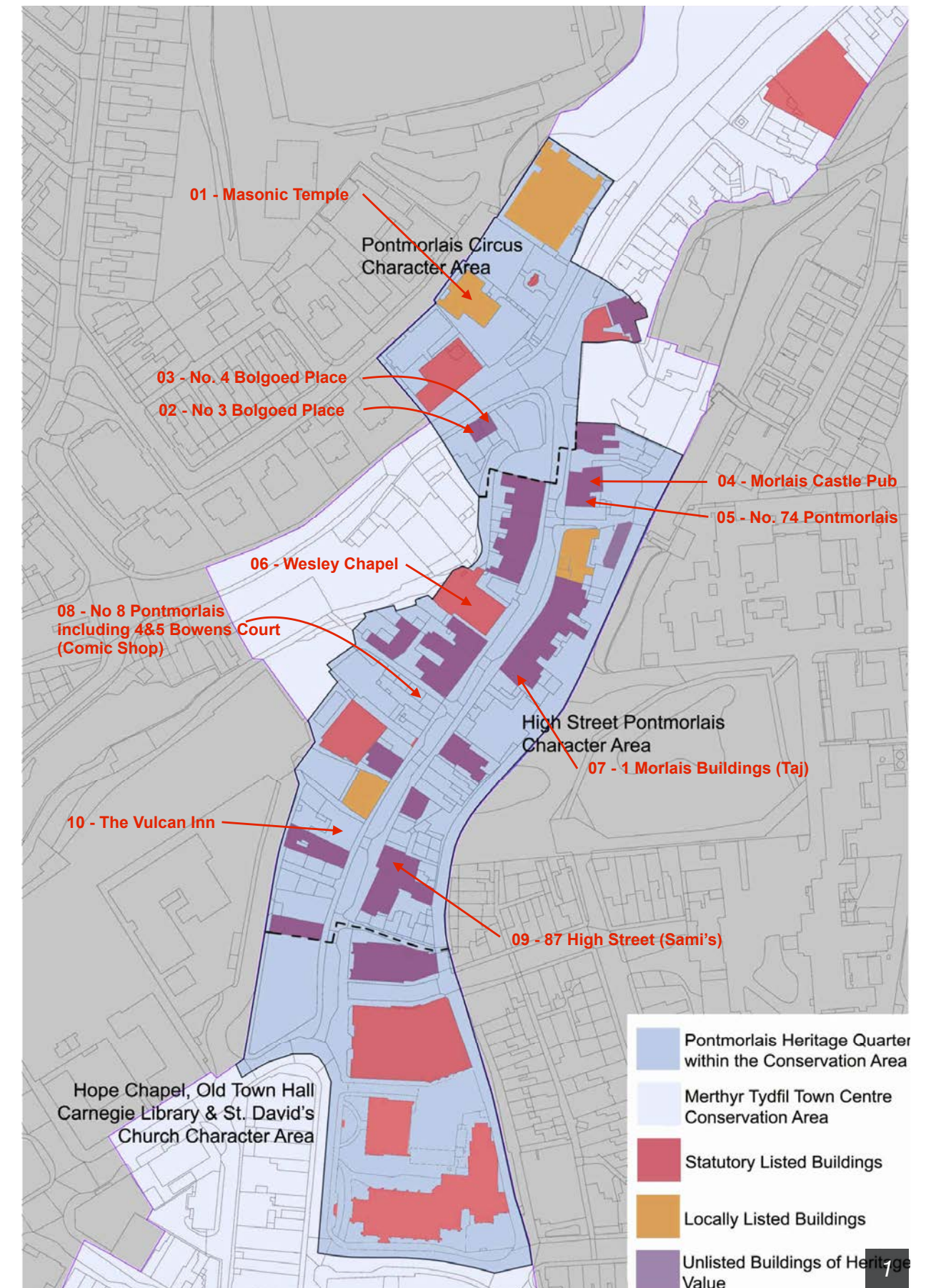
The current proposals have been developed as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) for the Pontmorlais area. The Heritage Lottery Fund Initiative in partnership with CADW and the local authority is aimed at regenerating run-down historic conservation areas through historic building repair. The programme is specifically designed to address problems in areas of particular social and economic need to improve the quality of the environment for all who live, work or visit there; to restore the appearance of the historic town and to encourage regeneration.

A recent Townscape Initiative Scheme has seen the regeneration of a number of properties within the Pontmorlais High Street Area which has already had a positive impact on the surroundings.

Focusing on the repair and reinstatement of historic fabric, eligible works typically include reinstatement of traditional shopfronts, timber sash windows, natural slate roof coverings, decorative ridge tiles, chimneys and rainwater goods, although the scope of works varies from property to property.

The objectives of the THI Scheme are consistent with the recommended strategies for improvement as set out in the Pontmorlais Conservation Area Management Plan (Insalls Report 2011) and with the relevant policies of the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (2006-2031) in particular strategic objective 11 – *to ensure the continued protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural, built and historic environment*

1. Key buildings in Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area (north) as identified in the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)



3-4 High Street has been identified as a key historic building within the conservation area. Although not nationally listed, the building has been identified as *unlisted building of heritage value* by the Town Centre Conservation Area Character Appraisal (June 2009). The building is considered to contribute to the environmental and cultural heritage of the Borough and through the current THI scheme the council is seeking to preserve and enhance these historic buildings.

The building is located at the north end of the High Street, within Character Area 3.

The main entrance to the building is from the High Street. The building is currently occupied with a restaurant on the ground floor and flats above. The ground floor steps up slightly from the street into the premises. An external staircase at the rear of the building leads to the entrance to the flat at first floor level. This is accessed by an alleyway from the High Street which runs down the side

of the building. The building is 3 storeys with a number of surviving historic features.

03 site & context

1. View of the shop front from the High Street

2. The rear view of the building from alleyway



04

condition of existing building

3-4 High Street is a semi-detached building on the High Street. 5 High Street has already been restored. The majority of historic features survive with isolated areas where detail has been lost and will be restored. The building & surviving fabric is generally in good condition.

The existing surviving decorative stone/stucco features including decorative window surrounds, quoins and feature banding have been painted blue as have the timber bargeboards and fasciaboards. The original decorative corner quoins have been partially lost at ground floor on the street elevation and full height on the south west flank elevation.

The original timber sash windows have been replaced with uPVC windows.

The original cornice and pilasters around the ground floor shop front has been removed and replaced with external security shutters and casing. There is a shop window with plastic (?) cladding panels between and an overhanging fascia panel above. The double entrance door to the shop unit steps up slightly from the street.

The South-east & South-west elevations are rendered. Historic photos show two chimneys on the ridge of the roof on both sides. These stacks survive, the larger of the two chimneys has chimney pots but these have been removed on the chimney on the South-West elevation.

The South-East elevation fronts the High Street. An alleyway to the side of the building leads to the rear of the building where there is an external staircase leading to the first floor. There is a double

gate securing the entrance to the alley where existing waste & recycling bins are stored.

The building has uPVC half round section gutters, hoppers and round downpipes. There are external extractor fans and services located externally on the flank elevation.



1. External shutters with tiled plinth and plastic cladding panels

2. Existing satellite dish and painted quoin details

3. Damaged render

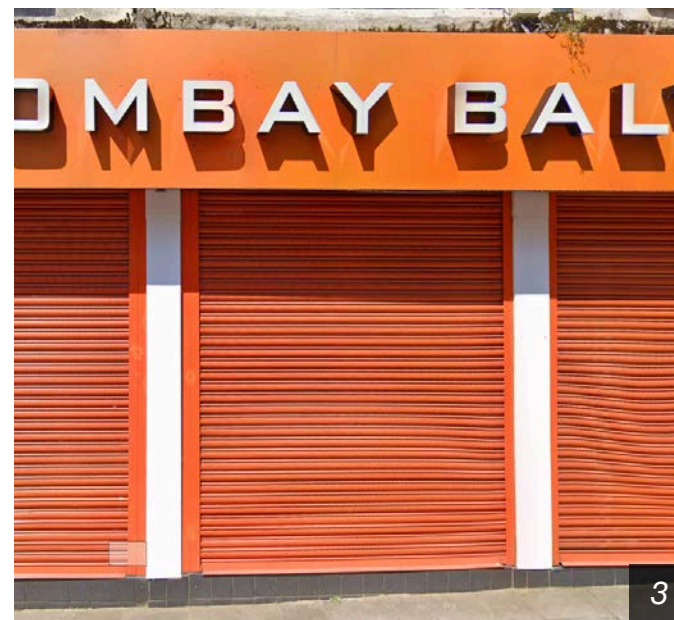
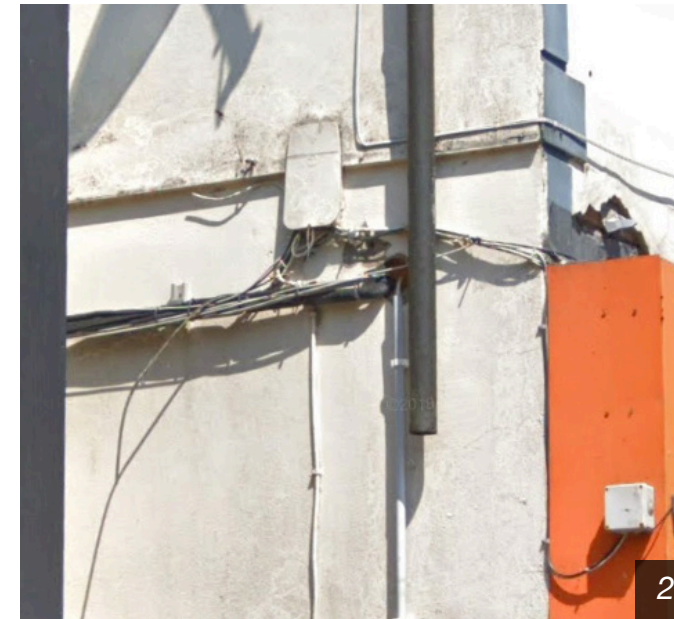
4. uPVC windows, painted stone banding and quoin details

5. uPVC window in original opening with painted timber surround details and stone cill

6. Painted timber bargeboards

The current proposal is to reinstate the historic features of the buildings and to remove the inappropriate alterations that are deemed to be harmful. The proposed alterations are based on existing details as well as historic photographs.

- Removal of existing shopfront and shutter and installation of new hardwood shopfront, pilasters and fascia etc. as historic images
- New internal shutter - details TBA with building owner
- Removal of uPVC windows and reinstatement of hardwood sash windows with slimline double glazed units at first and second floor (front elevation only)
- Reinstatement of quoin features to flank elevation and at ground floor of front elevation
- Repair / replacement of existing barge boards, fascia boards etc. with new painted hardwood to detail
- Isolated repairs to existing slate roof
- Vegetation removal / pointing repairs to existing chimney stacks
- Reinstatement decorative timber finial to central gable
- Overhaul / repair of existing rainwater goods (replace any uPVC with cast iron)
- Reinstatement of pots / vent caps to chimney to flank elevation
- Make good / repair existing render where quoins reinstated and isolated repairs elsewhere
- Decorate all render including decorative features with mineral paint (colours TBA)
- Remove redundant services / relocate satellite dish (subject to owner agreement)



05 proposed alterations & repairs

1. Reinstatement chimney pots / vent caps to brick chimney and removal of vegetation / pointing repairs to both chimneys
2. Removal of redundant services and satellite dish TBA
3. Removal of existing shopfront and shutters and installation of new hardwood shopfront with thin double glazed units
4. Reinstatement decorative timber finial to central gable
5. Historic image of shopfront (date unknown)

06 heritage impact

Whilst changes to buildings often reflect the way a building is used over time and can have significance in their own right, the alterations that have been carried out at 3-4 High Street are considered to have a detrimental impact on the aesthetic and historic value of the buildings.

The proposed works will remove the inappropriate and unsightly features such as the external security shutters, new shopfront fascia and uPVC windows. The existing render will be repaired and redecorated.

The existing roof will be repaired and new windows to the front elevation will be replaced with traditional hardwood windows / screens with thin double glazed units and timber doors.

The restoration of missing historic decorative details will reinstate the design and proportions of the original building and as such will improve the appearance of the building.

These changes will contribute to the aesthetic quality of the street and the pontmorlais heritage quarter as a whole. The improved appearance of the building and others which have been improved as part of the townscape heritage scheme will hopefully contribute to the economic regeneration of the area.

07 access

The proposals will not affect access to the building.

The proposed alterations will have no impact on existing movement to and from the site and surrounding areas.



3-4 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

1. Historic photograph showing the street-scape (date unknown)

08

reference material

Reference material

Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan 2006-20121 (MTDBC)

Merthyr Tydfil – Understanding Urban Character (CADW)

Pontmorlais Heritage Quarter – Conservation Area Management Plan (Donald Insalls 2011)

Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Areas Character Appraisal (MTDBC 2009)

Heritage Impact Assessments in Wales (CADW May 2017)

Design & Access Statements in Wales (CADW April 2017)

Alan George online archive

Francis Frith online archive

(Special thanks to Gareth Rogers from MTDBC for providing various maps and photographs from their records.)