

Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme

ferguson mann architects

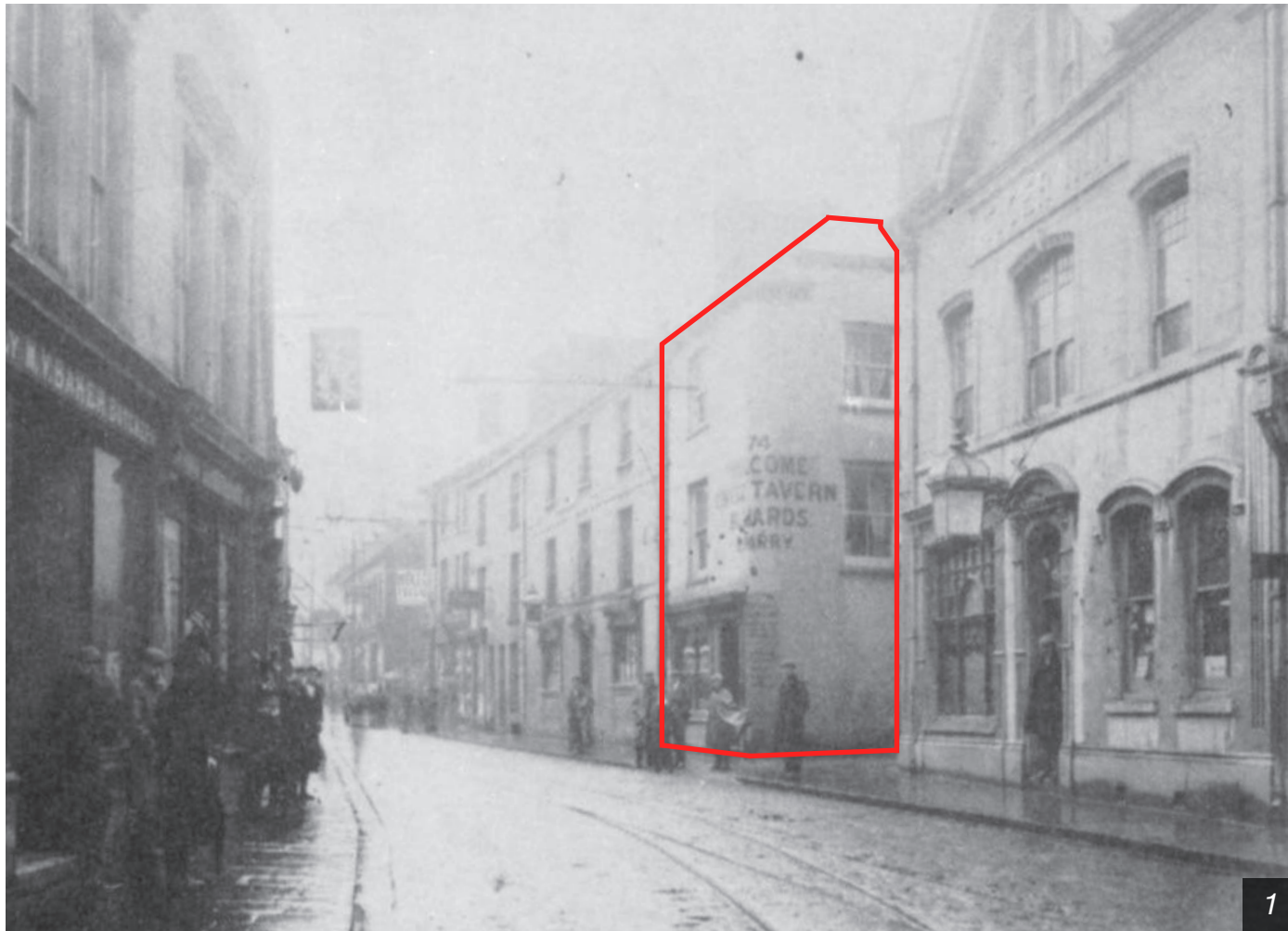
Design & Access Statement

(incl Heritage Impact Assessment)

74 High Street, Pontmorlais, Merthyr Tydfil

December 2019





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74 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.

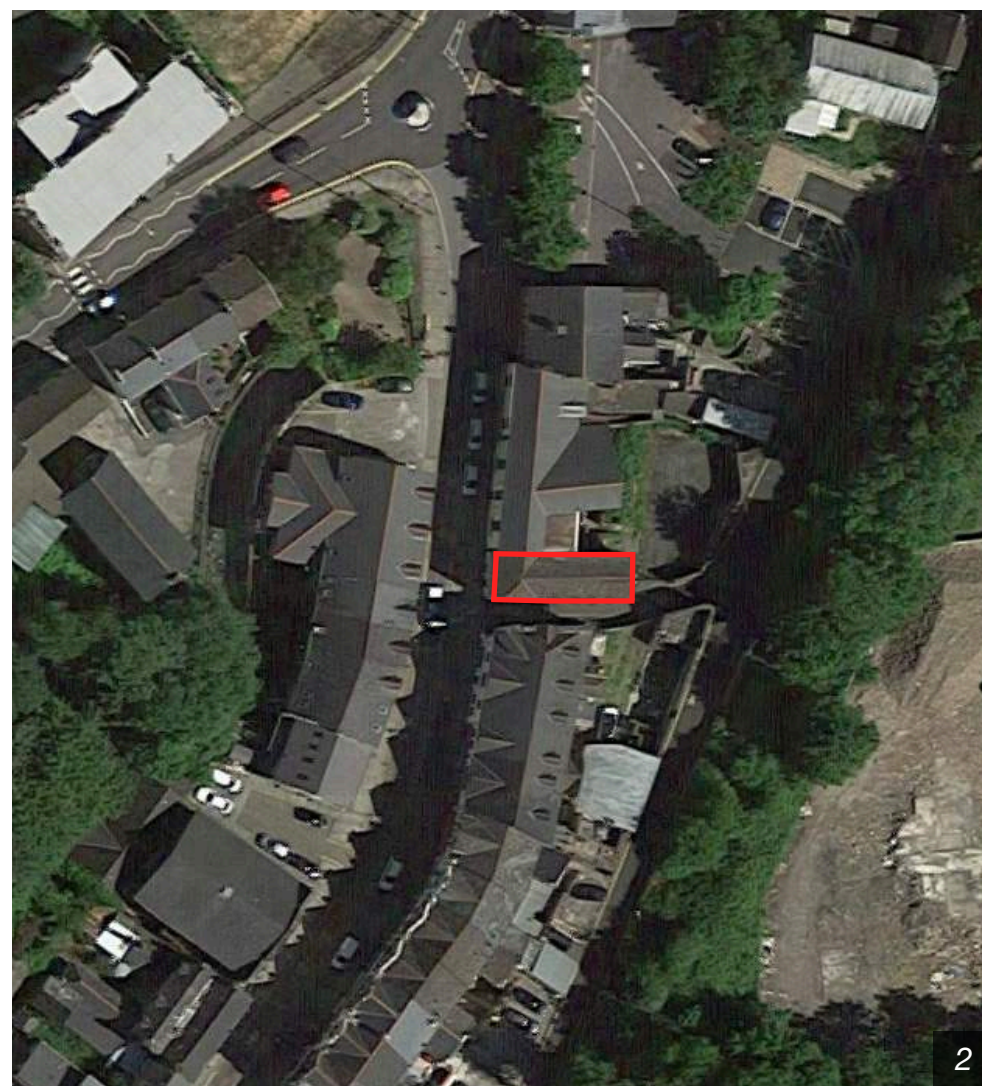
The importance of the area during these growth years is reflected in the rich variety of architectural styles that developed during the late 18th, 19th and into the early 20th century, all representative of the significant investment made in the area during this period.

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.

01 introduction



1. Historical view - building 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

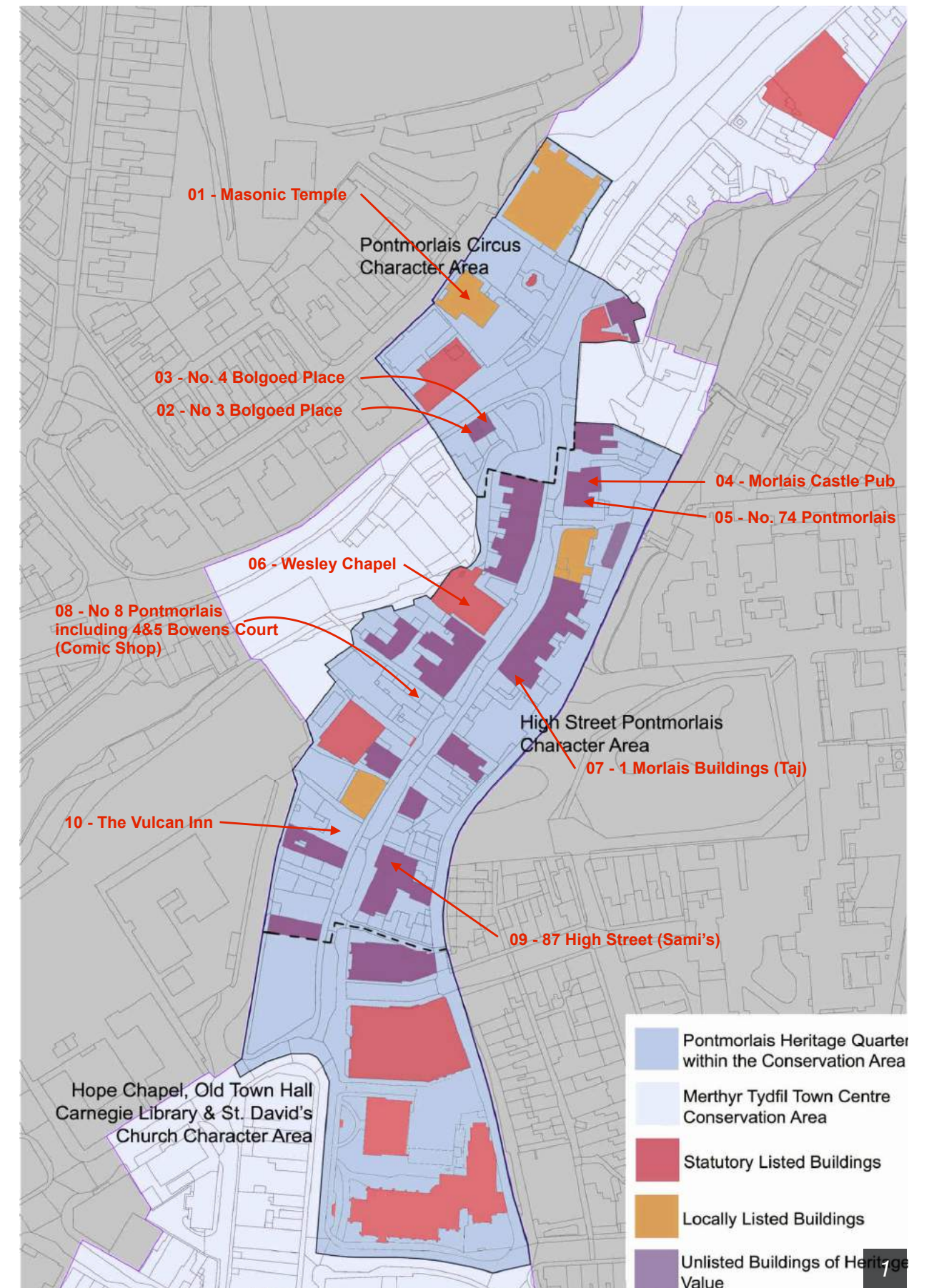
The current proposals have been developed as part of the Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) for the Pontmorlais area. The Heritage Lottery Fund Initiative in partnership with CADW and the local authority is aimed at regenerating run-down historic conservation areas through historic building repair. 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)



74 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 building is three storey with a vacant commercial/retail unit at ground floor and two self-contained flats per floor at first and second floor. The ground floor retail unit is accessed directly from the High Street. There is a level difference of approx 180mm between pavement and internal floor level.

The flats are accessed via an entrance door which exits direct onto the narrow access road which runs uphill from High Street to Tramroadside North. There is no pavement and the one way traffic flow has made the use of the door more hazardous than it was previously.

The building has no dedicated external space at the rear but a fire escape ladder arrangement at the rear of the premises currently exits within the yard/parking area belonging to the adjacent Morlais Castle. The building owner has advised that there was a 'gentlemans agreement' with the previous neighbouring owner regarding this arrangement, but he now understands that the internal fire escape route/layout means that the secondary escape ladder is not required. (This will need to be checked with Building Control prior to removal)

03 site & context

1. View of the shop front from the High Street

2. The rear view of the building from Tramroadside North



04

condition of existing building

74 High Street is at the south end of a terrace at the north end of the High Street. The building is devoid of historic features and old photographs evidence that the building form has been altered to remove a distinctive curved corner adjacent to the narrow alley to the south.

The ground floor of the building has a smooth finished render painted grey with a contrasting black band at the base of the wall. The first and second floors have been covered with pebble dash with contrasting decorative patterning which appears to mimic timber framing. This decorative detailing is unusual but not particularly attractive and is inappropriate for a building of this type in this location.

As noted above the street corner was curved historically which given that there is protective

steel capping on the squared corner suggests that there was a practical reason for the curve.

The roof appears to have been re-covered in what appears to be plain concrete tiles. The roof has been modified slightly to accommodate the front corner of the building when it was altered from its historic form.

The original shopfront has been removed and replaced with a uPVC window and separate recessed entrance door.

All the original windows and external stone cills have been removed and replaced with uPVC windows. Whilst window positions are consistent with historic photos, some opening sizes appear to have been modified.

To the rear there is a modern fire escape leading from the first and second floor to the ground via steel platforms and a steel ladder which is believed to be redundant (see 03 above)

There are a number of satellite dishes on this elevation and some overgrown vegetation at ground level.

Historic photos show three chimneys which have been demolished.

The building has a number of uPVC external foul drainage pipes and rainwater goods, particularly on the south elevation, which have been encased with protective covers at ground level.

There are also several vents and meter boxes on this elevation.



1. Render on West (shopfront) and South elevations.

2. New uPVC windows in historic window openings.

3. uPVC pipes and rainwater good.

4. Pipes with protective cover, meter boxes and vent along side street.

5. Pebble dash and timber detailing with new uPVC windows to High Street elevation.

6. Pebble dash to rear elevation and fire escape.



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

- Re roofing in natural slate
- Reinstall chimney stacks where practical to do so. (Subject to SE comments on condition of existing structure)
- Reinstall curved corner to the South-West and modify roof to match historic details. (Subject to SE comments on condition of existing structure)
- Remove all cement based renders and rerender in hydraulic lime render
- Install new hardwood shopfront with thin double glazed units.
- New timber fascia and cornice on the shopfront surround.
- New timber pilasters and decorative timber console brackets to shopfront.
- New stone stall risers to shopfront.
- Remove all uPVC windows and replace with timber sash windows to match historic details.
- Reinstall stone cills to all windows as historic detail
- Replace existing upvc rainwater goods with new cast iron
- Rationalise external drainage pipework on south elevation
- Remove redundant flues, pipework and vents
- Meter boxes to be removed from side elevation.
- Remove fire escape from rear elevation.



05 proposed alterations & repairs

1. Pebble dash and timber frame type detailing to be removed and redecorated with new render.

2. Existing uPVC pipes and rainwater goods to be replaced where feasible with cast iron.

3. uPVC windows in historic openings to be replaced with timber windows and stone cills.

4. Remove existing render, window and entrance door and install new hardwood shopfront with glazing.

5. Details of shopfront and window profiles taken from evidence in historical photographs.

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 74 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 pebble dash, timber frame type detailing, and uPVC windows. Historic features such as the curved corner to the front of the building and a hardwood shopfront will be reinstated. (Corner subject to SE assessment)

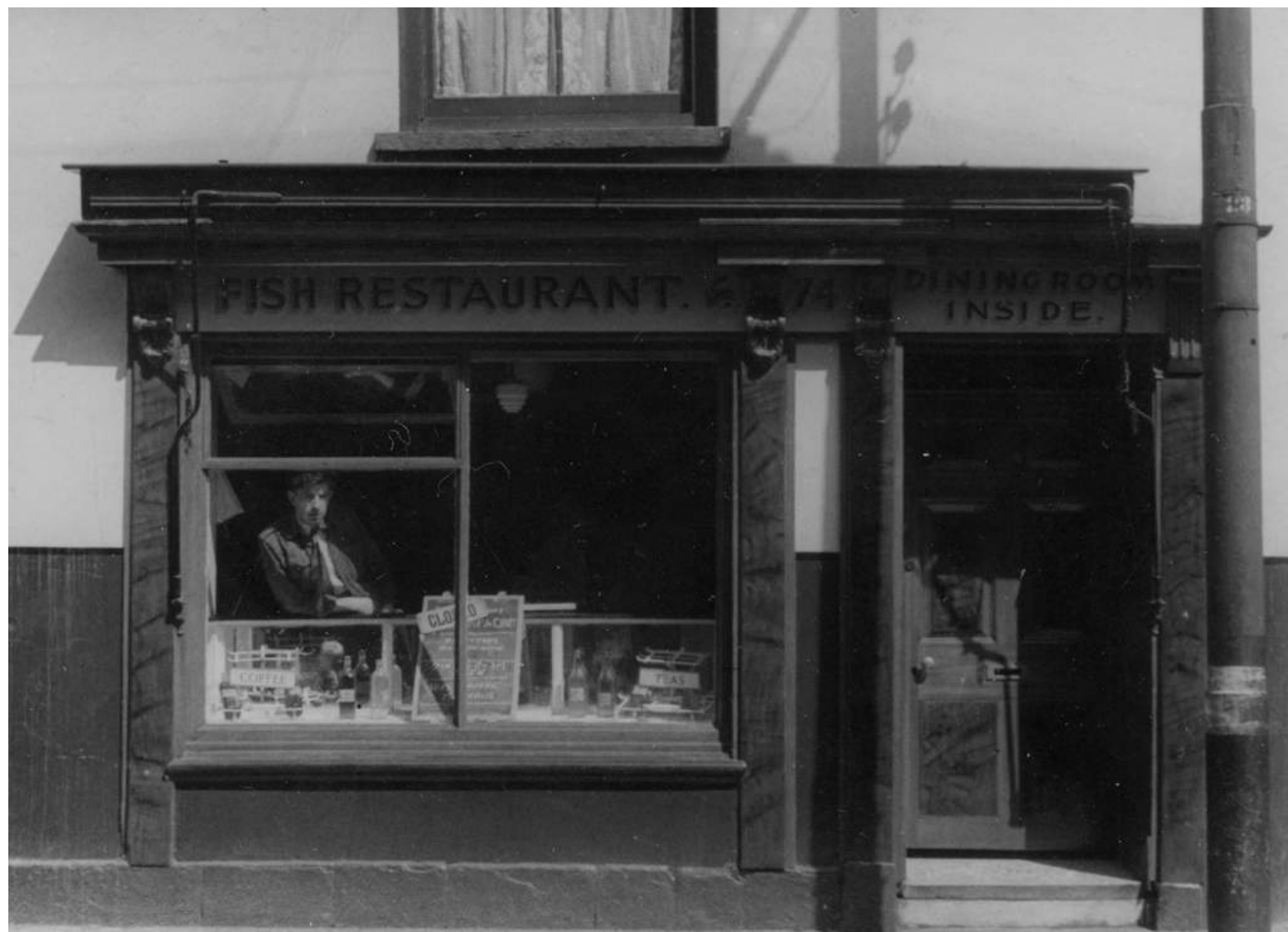
The existing roof will be replaced with a new slate roof and all new windows will be replaced with traditional hardwood sash windows with stone cills, thin double glazed units.

The reinstatement of chimney stacks will assist in restoring the design and proportions of the original building and as such will improve the appearance of the terrace.

07 access

The proposed alterations to the shopfront will remove the stepped entrance and provide a ramped access onto the premises therefore improving access

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



74 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

1. Picture showing the historic shopfront.

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 & Victoria Parry from MTDBC for providing various maps and photographs from their records.)

