



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

34-38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Heritage Statement





Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

34-38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Heritage Statement

Type of document (version) Public

Project no. UK-70121420

Our Ref. No. UK-70121420-001-LHS Arch

Date: December 2024

WSP

8 First Street

Manchester

M15 4RP

Phone: +44 161 200 5000

WSP.com



Quality control

Issue/revision	First issue	Revision 1	Revision 2	Revision 3
Remarks	First issue			
Date	19/12/2024			
Prepared by	Phillipa Haworth			
Signature	Digitally signed by Haworth, Phillipa (UKPJH005) DN: cn=Haworth, Phillipa (UKPJH005), ou=Active, email=Phillipa.Haworth@wsp.com Date: 2024.12.19 17:22:36 Haworth, Phillipa (UKPJH005)			
Input and Checked by	Chris Colville			
Signature	Digitally signed by Colville, Chris (UKCGC001) DN: cn=Colville, Chris (UKCGC001), ou=Active, email=Chris.Colville@wsp.com Reason: I have reviewed this document Date: 2024.12.19 17:17:11 Colville, Chris (UKCGC001)			
Authorised by	Helen Maclean			
Signature	Digitally signed by Maclean, Helen (UKHXM026) DN: cn=Maclean, Helen (UKHXM026), ou=Active, email=Helen.Maclean@wsp.com Reason: I agree to the terms defined by the placement of my signature on this document Location: Leeds Date: 2024.12.19 17:26:01 Maclean, Helen (UKHXM026)			
Project number	UK-70121420-001-LHS Arch			
Report number	1			
File reference	\\uk.wspgroup.com\UKcentral\Environmental\ARCHAEOLOGY\WALE\High Street, Merthyr Tydfil\Report			

Statement of liability

This document is for the exclusive benefit of the Client (Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council). It may not be assigned to or relied upon by a third party without the agreement of WSP UK Limited ('WSP') in writing. WSP retains all copyright and other intellectual property rights in the document and its contents unless transferred by written agreement between WSP and the Client.

The findings and opinions expressed are based on the conditions encountered and/or the information reasonably available at the date of issue of this document (or other date e.g. date of inspection) and shall be applicable only to the circumstances envisaged herein.

No person except the Client shall have the benefit of this document by virtue of the *Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999*.

Contents

Executive summary

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Project Background	2
1.2	Location and Description	2
2	Planning Legislation, Policy and Development Plan Framework	6
2.1	National Planning Legislation	6
2.2	National Planning Policy and Guidance	6
2.3	Local Planning Policy	7
3	Methodology and Sources	9
3.1	Research	9
3.2	Site Visit	10
3.3	Assessing Heritage Significance	10
3.4	Assessing Harm	12
3.5	Assessing the Contribution of Setting	12
4	Historical Development and Identification of Historic Assets	14
4.1	Introduction	14
4.2	Archive Material Consulted	14
4.3	Historical Background	14
4.4	Identification of Historic Assets	17
5	Statement of Significance	26
5.1	Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area	26
5.2	Grade II Listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451)	27

6	Proposed Development and Potential Impact on Historic Assets	29
6.1	Proposed Development	29
6.2	Potential Impacts on Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area	29
6.3	Potential Impacts on the Setting of Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church	30
7	Conclusion and recommendations	31
7.1	Summary	31
7.2	Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area	31
7.3	Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church	31

Tables

Table 1 – Data sources consulted

Table 2 – Significance of historic assets

Plates

Plate 1: Principal front (west) elevations to nos. 34-38 High Street. Note that this view is taken from the north looking south-east.

Plate 2: Principal west elevation to the Monique's Building, located at 38 High Street

Plate 3: Principal west elevation to the Peacocks Building, located at no. 37 High Street

Plate 4: Principal west elevation to the British Red Cross Building, located at nos. 34-36 High Street

Plate 5: View north-east along High Street taken from Swan Street. Note that nos. 34-38 High Street are marked by the red arrow. Note the variety of architectural Styles to this part of High Street.

Plate 6: View east along Masonic Street, taken from Swan Street looking towards the Railway Station. Note that High Street is evident in left and right of picture.

Plate 7: Rear elevation of Monique's Building at no. 38 High Street. Note the narrow back passage.

Plate 8: South facing side elevation of Monique's Building. Note that the first-floor elevation to the Peacocks Building is evident (marked by red arrow)

Plate 9: Rear of the Peacocks Building facing south-west. Note that this picture is taken from the Railway Station

Plate 10: South facing side elevation to the British Red Cross Building (centre). Note that part of the rear elevation to the Peacocks Building as also evident (right).

Plate 11: Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451) taken from High Street, facing south-west.

Plate 12: Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451) taken from High Street, facing south-west and showing its position on High Street

Appendices

Appendix A

References

Appendix B

Figures

Figures

Figure 1 – Site location

Figure 2 – Designated built historic assets

Figure 3 – Ordnance Survey 1:500 map of 1875 (not to scale)

Figure 4 – Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1900 (not to scale)

Figure 5 – Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map of 1919 (not to scale)

Figure 6 – Ordnance Survey 1:250 map of 1969-75 (not to scale)

Executive summary

WSP has been commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) to support planning and Conservation Area Consent applications for the proposed redevelopment of nos. 34-38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil. The proposed works include the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate the new Merthyr Interchange Link, which will provide a link between the High Street and the Railway Station. The site of the northernmost building in the group (known as Monique's Building) will see a new build in an architectural style consistent with the building as part of the proposal. This HS provides an understanding of the heritage significance of the subject buildings, which are located within the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) and considers how setting contributes to that significance. It then assesses the likely impact of the proposal on that significance in support of a planning application to carry out the proposed works.

The proposal is designed to enhance this part of the conservation area. While the proposal involves the demolition of buildings of historic value and will result in a **low level of harm** to the significance and setting of the CA designation, a new build on the site of Monique's Building in an architectural style consistent with the existing building will reduce the level of impact on the significance of the CA.

When considered in isolation, the loss of Monique's Building will result in a **moderate level of harm**. In this regard, salvaged material should be utilised if this is viable, and the building should be recorded to an adequate standard prior to demolition. Subject to a quality building replacing the existing building in a similar architectural style, this would reduce the level of harm identified.

The Peacocks Building, which occupies the central part of the terrace group is of no historic value and its loss will result in **no harm**.

The southernmost British Red Cross Building has some limited aesthetic and historic value, given that it has seen extensive alteration, particularly at ground level to its principal west elevation. For this reason, its loss will result in a **low level of harm**. It is recommended that the building is recorded to an adequate standard prior to demolition.

While the loss of these buildings will create a gap in the continuous built form to this part of the conservation area designation, there is an opportunity to enhance this part of the designation through public realm improvements.

There will be no physical impact on the High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451), but the Proposal will result in a small change to its setting. However, the public realm works represent an enhancement and the significance and setting of the historic asset will not be impacted.

1 Introduction

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1. WSP has been commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) to support planning and Conservation Area Consent applications for the proposed works at nos. 34-38 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil (National Grid Reference/NGR 304949, 205979; **Figure 1**). The Site comprises the terrace group at nos. 34-38 High Street and also captures part of Masonic Street to the east of this group.
- 1.1.2. The 'Proposal' (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposal' or 'Proposed Development') presents an opportunity to introduce an open and inviting route from the High Street to the Railway Station. The Merthyr Interchange Link Project proposes the demolition of a number of buildings (nos. 34-38 High Street) to allow for a new access route. The Proposal includes the rebuilding of the northernmost building (known as Monique's Building) in the terrace group. The route will be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists to provide a vibrant and lively public realm space. This will contribute to the much-needed regeneration of the town centre and perform an important role for the local community and visitors of Merthyr Tydfil.
- 1.1.3. In accordance with Paragraph 6.1.9 of *Planning Policy Wales* (PPW), which sets out the requirement for applicants to fully consider the impact of proposals on the significance and heritage values of historic assets including their contribution to setting, this report draws together available information on the historic assets impacted by the Proposed Development. The historic development of the Site and its immediate environs are discussed to inform this process.
- 1.1.4. The report enables relevant parties to assess the significance of the historic assets, thus enabling potential impacts to be identified along with the need for mitigative strategies.

1.2 Location and Description

- 1.2.1. Merthyr Tydfil is situated at the northern end of the Taff Valley, South Wales, approximately 30 kilometres to the north-west of Cardiff. The town centre stands on the east bank of the River Taff surrounded by a mountainous landscape setting. Historic road and rail links run through and into the town centre, including the Taff Valley Branch Railway Line, terminating at Merthyr Tydfil. The town contains the historic commercial, religious and administrative centre of the historic industrial district.
- 1.2.2. The Site is located on the east side of High Street close to the junction with Masonic Street and Swan Street, which are located a short distance to the south. The Site comprises three two storey buildings (**Plates 1-4**) as follows:
 - British Red Cross Building (nos. 34-36), which is a heavily altered early 20th century building.
 - Peacocks Building (no. 37), which dates from the mid-20th century.

- Monique's Building (no. 38), which dates from the 19th century.

1.2.3. The Site is located within the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area, and forms part of a row of retail outlets on fronting High Street.



Plate 1 – Principal front (west) elevations to nos. 34-38 High Street. Note that this view is taken from the north looking south-east.



Plate 2: Principal west elevation to Monique's Building, located at no. 38 High Street



Plate 3: Principal west elevation to the Peacocks Building, located at no. 37 High Street



Plate 4: Principal west elevation to the British Red Cross Building, located at nos. 34-36 High Street

2 Planning Legislation, Policy and Development Plan Framework

2.1 National Planning Legislation

Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023

- 2.1.1. The *Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2023* (hereafter referred to as ‘the Act’) brings together the principal legislation for the conservation of the historic environment in Wales. This means that a single Act now contains all the legislation for the protection and management of historic monuments and buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the Welsh historic environment.
- 2.1.2. Part 3 of the Act deals with listed buildings and includes the control of works that affect them.
- 2.1.3. Part 4 deals with conservation areas. Sections 160-162 set out the legal requirements for the control of development within conservation areas. This includes the requirement for demolition works to be authorised by Conservation Area Consent.

2.2 National Planning Policy and Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (2024)

- 2.2.1. *Planning Policy Wales 2024* (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. It is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs), Welsh Government Circulars, and policy clarification letters, which together with PPW provide the national planning policy framework for Wales. It outlines policies for the historic environment and requirements for planning applications in relation to historic assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas and locally listed assets.
- 2.2.2. Section 6.1 of the PPW deals with the historic environment. Paragraph 6.1.5 notes that:

‘the historic environment can only be maintained as a resource for future generations if the individual historic assets are protected and conserved. Cadw’s published Conservation Principles highlights the need to base decisions on an understanding of the impact a proposal may have on the significance of an historic asset’.
- 2.2.3. Paragraph 6.1.10 relates to listed buildings and states that:

‘for any development proposal affecting a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.
- 2.2.4. Paragraph 6.1.15 relates to conservation areas and states that:

‘There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance

of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.'

PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (2017)

2.2.5. The *PPW Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment (HE TAN) 2017* provides guidance on how the planning system considers the historic environment during development plan preparation and decision making on planning and Listed Building Consent applications. The HE TAN provides specific guidance on how the following aspects of the historic environment should be considered:

- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled monuments
- Archaeological remains
- Listed buildings
- Conservation areas
- Historic parks and gardens
- Historic landscapes
- Historic assets of special local interest

Managing Setting in the Historic Environment (CADW) 2017

2.2.6. The *Managing Setting in the Historic Environment 2017* (Setting Guidance 2017) has been prepared by Cadw to provide guidance on the implications of development on the setting of historic assets.

2.2.7. The definition of setting as described as in the Setting Guidance 2017 is as follows:

'the surroundings in which it [historic asset] is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the significance of an asset.'

2.2.8. Cadw's guidance considers that the importance of setting lies in what it contributes to the significance of the historic asset. This depends on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associational attributes pertaining to, the historic asset's surroundings.

2.3 Local Planning Policy

2.3.1. The *Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016 – 2031* (LDP) was adopted in 2020 and sets out planning policies and allocates sites for different types of development. The relevant policies are cited below.

Policy CW1: The Historic Environment

2.3.2. Policy CW1 relates to the historic environment and states:

The integrity of our historic environment assets will be conserved and enhanced. Development proposals will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated they would preserve or enhance the architectural quality, character or the historic or cultural importance of our designated historic environment assets. Development affecting undesignated historic environment assets including, Locally Listed Buildings or structures, Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest in Wales, Urban Character Areas and Archaeologically Sensitive Areas should have regard to their special character and archaeological importance.

3 Methodology and Sources

3.1 Research

3.1.1. A range of data sources were used in the research for this report, all of which are referenced in the text and detailed in full in the references in Appendix A. The table below provides a summary of the key data sources.

Table 1 – Data sources consulted.

Source	Data	Comment
Cadw	Information on statutorily designated historic assets	Statutory designations (scheduled monuments; listed buildings) can provide a significant constraint to development.
Glamorgan Archives	Historic maps (e.g. Tithe, enclosure, estate), published journals and local history	Baseline information on the historic environment
Groundsure	Ordnance Survey maps from the 1st edition (1860–70s) to present day	Provides a good indication of past land use and impacts which may have compromised archaeological survival. Provides an indication of the possible date of any buildings on the site.
Google	Satellite imagery and Streetview	General mapping and visual information of the Site and surrounds.
Internet	Web-published local history	Many key documentary sources, such as local and specialist studies are now published on the web and can be used to inform the historical background.

- 3.1.2. This report sets out the history of the Site and its immediate environs (**Section 4**), the significance of historic assets (**Section 5**) and assesses the impact of the proposed works on the historic assets within the Site and in its immediate vicinity, in relation to relevant policy (**Section 6**).
- 3.1.3. To provide historic background context for the Site and to inform the assessment of setting, a 150 metres radius study area from the centre of the Site was considered. The extent of the study area was defined using professional judgement to capture the historic setting of this part of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area.

3.1.4. **Figure 2** shows the location of selected designated built historic assets within 150 metres of the Site, as identified by the sources above, the site visit (4 December 2024), or during the course of research for this assessment.

3.2 Site Visit

3.2.1. A site visit was carried out on 4 December 2024 to assess the buildings within the Site and to determine where changes have occurred over time. This involved a site walkover, which included photographing the exterior elevations. Access to the interior of Monique’s Building was not possible during the site visit, but interior photographs were provided by the architect.

3.3 Assessing Heritage Significance

3.3.1. Significance is the value of a historic asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. As outlined in Cadw’s *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales 2017* (HIA Guidance 2017), that interest may be aesthetic, communal, evidential or historic. The determination of the significance of a historic asset is based on statutory designation and/or professional judgement against these values. The HIA Guidance 2017 defines the values as follows:

- *Aesthetic*: the design, construction and craftsmanship of an historic asset. This can also include setting and views to and from the historic asset, which may have changed through time.
- *Communal*: the historic asset may have particular significance to people for its commemorative, symbolic or spiritual value, or for the part it has played in local cultural or public life. This will be particularly important in the case of buildings in public use or sites where public access must be maintained or improved.
- *Evidential*: the extent to which the physical fabric tells how and when an historic asset was made, how it was used and how it has changed over time. There may be buried or obscured elements associated with an historic asset which may also be an important potential source of evidence.
- *Historic*: an historic asset may illustrate a particular past way of life or be associated with a specific person or event; there may be physical evidence for these connections which it could be important to retain.

3.3.2. The table below gives examples of the significance of designated and non-designated historic assets.

Table 2 – Significance of historic assets

Historic asset description	Significance
World heritage sites	Very High
Scheduled monuments	High

Historic asset description	Significance
Grade I and II* listed buildings Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens Grade II listed buildings with exceptional qualities in fabric, historical association, and/or association/group value with heritage assets of high significance Designated historic battlefields Protected Wrecks Registered Battlefield Conservation Areas containing very important (Grade I / II*) listed buildings Protected heritage landscapes (e.g. ancient woodland or historic hedgerows, heritage Sites of Special Scientific Interest) Burial grounds Non-designated historic assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape, buried remains) of national importance.	
Grade II listed buildings which can be shown to have qualities in their fabric or historical association of regional importance only Conservation Areas containing primarily Grade II listed or locally listed buildings Grade II registered parks and gardens Locally listed buildings Non-designated historic assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape, buried remains) of regional importance.	Medium
Non-designated historic assets (above ground structures, landscape, townscape, buried remains) of local importance.	Low
Item with no significant value or interest	Negligible
Historic assets that have a clear potential, but for which current knowledge is insufficient to allow significance to be determined.	Uncertain

3.4 Assessing Harm

- 3.4.1. Professional judgement is used to consider the harm (the magnitude of change) that will be caused by future development on the significance of a known or potential historic asset.
- 3.4.2. For the purposes of assessing the likely impact on significance resulting from the Proposed Development and the subsequent impact on the settings of the identified heritage assets (**Section 4.4**), the following criteria have been employed:
 - **None or Negligible** - impacts considered to cause no material change.
 - **Low** - impacts considered to make a small difference to the ability to understand and appreciate the heritage value of a historic asset. A low impact may also be defined as involving receptors of low sensitivity exposed to intrusion, obstruction or change of low to moderate magnitudes for short periods of time. In conservation area terms, examples include the loss of a building deemed to have seen notable change and of low significance.
 - **Moderate** - impacts considered to make an appreciable difference to the ability to understand or appreciate the heritage value of an historic asset. In conservation area terms, this may include the loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the designation but is deemed to be of low significance.
 - **High** - impacts considered to cause a fundamental change in the appreciation of the historic asset. In conservation area terms, this may include substantial demolition i.e. a large group of buildings that make a positive contribution to the designation.

3.5 Assessing the Contribution of Setting

- 3.5.1. In relation to designated historic assets, the assessment considers the contribution that setting makes to the overall significance of the assets.
- 3.5.2. Setting is the way in which an asset is understood and experienced. It is not an asset in itself. It differs from curtilage (historic/present property boundary); context (association with other assets irrespective of distance) and historic character (sum of all historic attributes, including setting, associations, and visual aspects).
- 3.5.3. Cadw's Setting Guidance 2017 has been used to adopt a stepped approach for settings assessment. It sets out four stages as follows:
 - *Stage 1:* Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.
 - *Stage 2:* Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and, in particular, the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced.
 - *Stage 3:* Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

- *Stage 4:* If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.

4 Historical Development and Identification of Historic Assets

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1. The following section presents a more recent historical development of the Site and its immediate environs through the results of a map regression exercise and review of relevant background documentation.
- 4.1.2. The location of designated and non-designated historic assets within and surrounding the Site are also discussed below; those designated heritage assets within and in the wider vicinity (within 150 metres) of the Site are shown on **Figure 2**.

4.2 Archive Material Consulted

- 4.2.1. Background information was identified in the Glamorgan Archives. The following documents were consulted:
 - **DSA/6/1012**, Vaynor House, Cefn Coed, Breconshire & 34-42 High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, 24 May 1933;
 - **DSA/6/454**, Property of North's Navigation Collieries (1889) Limited at Cymmer, Caerau, Nantyffyllon and Maesteg Uchaf;
 - **DXFC/43/41**, Merthyr Tydfil: High Street, leading from railway station and showing sign for New Inn Hotel, c1910;
 - **DVAU/67**, Plans of proposed widening of High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, 1912
 - **DXUN**, Merthyr Tydfil maps and plans; and
 - **OS/24/MERTHYR** Merthyr Tydfil, 1852.

4.3 Historical Background

Merthyr Tydfil Settlement

- 4.3.1. The history of Merthyr Tydfil is irreversibly connected to the iron and coal industries which emerged in the 18th and 19th centuries. The abundant coal deposits and high-quality iron ore led to the establishment of ironworks, collieries, and other industrial facilities in the area. This turned Merthyr Tydfil into an industrial hub and attracted thousands of workers from across Wales and beyond. Throughout the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Merthyr Tydfil was a crucible of innovation at the very forefront of Britain's industrial revolution¹.

¹ WSP (2024) Merthyr Interchange Link Design & Access Statement

- 4.3.2. The expansive industrial changes in the late 18th century, had a lasting impact on the surrounding landscape. The town's very location was determined by its central position between the Plymouth, Cyfarthfa and Penydarren ironworks, for which it provided town centre functions. The landscape became a blend of stark industrial structures, mining operations, and growing urban settlements².
- 4.3.3. The medieval village was focused on the Church of St Tydfil, 160m to the south-west of the Site. However, the main urban development of Merthyr Tydfil followed the foundation of the first ironworks at the head of the Taff Valley between 1759 and 1765. William Yates' map of Glamorgan of 1799 (not reproduced here) records the area of this development with a northern limit at Swan Street, 30m to the south of the Proposed Development. The early urban expansion appears to have been opportunistic, developing small plots of land as they arose without any control or planning, which created a cramped and disorganised streetscape of small groups of cottages and inns, set at odd angles to each other and the road³.
- 4.3.4. Development along High Street most likely began as residential, but it soon acquired a commercial role as the thread linking different residential areas. No buildings from the early-19th century survive along the street, but there are some from the middle of the century, and many more from the late-19th and early-20th centuries. At the end of the 19th century, High Street had consolidated its role as an important civic, religious and cultural focus in the town⁴.
- 4.3.5. Tramways were built in the north of, what is now, the Town Centre Conservation Area (CA) to link the Penydarren and Dowlais Ironworks to the Glamorganshire Canal, which was completed in 1794. These were rapidly adopted as roads, forming the alignments of Penydarren Road and Pontmorlais West. The creation of a route between the early urban core and the tramway, via a bridge across the Morlais Stream, provided the impetus for urban development in the north. This development was largely uncontrolled creating a scattered pattern of buildings along a sinuous route with numerous small buildings filling plots behind the street frontages.
- 4.3.6. Historical transport has had a strong influence on settlement. The 1830s to 1860s saw expansion in railway building both in Britain and around the world, which resulted in phases of major growth in Merthyr Tydfil and its ironwork communities. The line of High Street is an early route and, immediately to its east, a boundary between the town centre and

² Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

³ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

⁴ Cadw, (2015) Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character

Thomastown beyond. From the 1840s, the railway lines and station created an even stronger boundary to the east⁵.

- 4.3.7. The closure of the Penydarren Ironworks in 1883 and sale of Penydarren Park, provided an opportunity for expansion of the town centre northwards from the 1880s. New housing and shops were built over the obsolete tramways.
- 4.3.8. By the mid-19th century Merthyr Tydfil held commercial and spiritual dominance over the surrounding townships, the town centre also became the centre for the governance of the area with the creation of the Merthyr Tydfil Urban District Council in 1895. A new town hall with law courts was built in 1896 providing an ostentatious architectural expression of the town's new found corporate identity⁶.
- 4.3.9. Redevelopment of the town in the 20th century has removed a substantial part of the historic street pattern, but High Street, Swan Street, Glebeland Street and Castle Street are important survivors that still anchor the area to its past.⁷
- 4.3.10. A large open square was created in the 1960s by the demolition of many of the buildings of the early urban core in the south of the town centre (including structures on Lower High Street, Broad Street, Gillar Street and Court Street). This now forms an attractive southern entrance to the town centre⁸.

The Site

Monique's Building

- 4.3.11. The date that Monique's Building was constructed is unclear. The Tithe Map of 1850 (not reproduced here) shows that the Site was built up at this time; however, there are no details of individual buildings. The railway to the rear of the properties on High Street is not in place on this map, and the area is described as a meadow in the accompanying apportionment.
- 4.3.12. The first available Ordnance Survey map is from 1875 (**Figure 3**) shows Monique's Building (no. 38 High Street) located next to 'The Globe Tavern' (now demolished). The building looks to be of a back-to-back design, with a building fronting High Street and another building adjoining it to the east, with associated buildings attached to the rear of the property. The latter faces towards a back yard and the railway.
- 4.3.13. The 1900 Ordnance Survey map (**Figure 4**) shows some consolidation of the structures at the rear. There is no apparent change to the building on the 1919 Ordnance Survey map (**Figure 5**).

⁵ Cadw, (2015) Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character

⁶ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

⁷ Cadw, (2015) Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character

⁸ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

- 4.3.14. By the late 1960s and early 1970s (**Figure 6**), the building had been extended to the rear with the outbuildings shown on previous maps incorporated into the main building.

Peacocks Building

- 4.3.15. The Peacocks Building first appears on the 1969-75 Ordnance Survey map (**Figure 6**), replacing the Globe Public House, which was previously sited in this location.

British Red Cross Building

- 4.3.16. Two buildings can be seen on the 1875 Ordnance Survey map (**Figure 3**), although it is unclear if these are the same buildings visible today. There is a larger L shaped building to the south of the Globe Tavern (possibly nos. 35-36), which extends behind the much smaller building to the south (no. 34). Another building looks to be attached to the rear of the northern part of nos. 35-36, and a brewery building is located to the rear of the properties (to the east) and abuts the south-east corner of nos. 35-36.
- 4.3.17. There seems to be very little in the way of change between the 1875 and the 1900 Ordnance Survey mapping (**Figure 4**). By 1919 (**Figure 5**), a number of additional structures are evident in the eastern part of the Site.
- 4.3.18. On the 1956 Ordnance Survey mapping (not reproduced here), the larger building which represented nos. 35-36, has been split into two separate buildings, although they are both labelled as no. 36, with no. 34 still a separate building.
- 4.3.19. By the time of the 1969-1975 Ordnance Survey map (**Figure 6**), the Peacocks building (no. 37) is now in place and looks to be of a much larger scale than the Globe Public House, which was sited there previously, possibly encroaching onto the former nos. 34-36 buildings. The latter are now shown as two narrow buildings in footprint terms, with a small diagonal passageway behind them, separating them from buildings associated with no. 33 High Street (previously the brewery buildings).

4.4 Identification of Historic Assets

Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area

- 4.4.1. The Town Centre CA contains the medieval village and early industrial settlement core of Merthyr Tydfil. The medieval village was focussed on St Tydfil's Church, Maerdy House (which stood in the area of the Lower High Street Square) and The Court House⁹.
- 4.4.2. The designation comprises the historic commercial, religious and administrative centre of the industrial district that developed between the mid-18th and early 20th centuries, creating

⁹ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

the first major industrial town in Wales. During this period the area was transformed from a small valley-floor village into a thriving town centre, due to the rapid industrial development of the area which resulted in huge population growth.

- 4.4.3. The evolution of this townscape was achieved through successive stages of opportunistic building without planning or design, as well as the establishment of planned grids of streets by wealthy individuals and the erection of public buildings through communal endeavour and later development under the centralised control of the Local Board and the Urban District Council¹⁰.
- 4.4.4. The buildings of the town centre represent each phase of this development, while also providing structures which represent the main functions of the town centre, including public houses, shops, churches, chapels and civic buildings. The town centre has a strong linear form based on a central High Street with numerous broad side streets and smaller lanes and courts. High Street also contains buildings of various architectural styles (**Plates 5 and 6**), including examples of late Regency Classical, Gothic Revival and Baroque design¹¹.



Plate 5: View north-east along High Street taken from Swan Street. Nos. 34-38 High Street are marked by the red arrow. Note the variety of architectural styles to this part of High Street.

¹⁰ Cadw, (2015) Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character

¹¹ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal



Plate 6: View east along Masonic Street, taken from Swan Street looking towards the Railway Station. Note that High Street is evident in left and right of picture.

The Site (nos. 34-38 High Street)

- 4.4.5. The Site is located in the southern part of the CA designation, with each building varying in construction date.

Monique's Building

- 4.4.6. Monique's Building (**Plates 1 and 2**), located at no. 38 High Street, occupies the northernmost part of the Site. It is a traditionally proportioned mid-to-late 19th century commercial building and has a brick face at first and second floor level to its High Street elevation (now painted). At first and second floor level there is a pair of 2-over-2 timber sash windows at each level. At ground floor level there is a shop front with a timber pilaster at either end. The building is in a poor state of repair and has been structurally compromised.
- 4.4.7. The rear elevation of the building (**Plate 7**) is partially obscured by the rear of the adjacent Peacocks Building (no. 37 High Street). The windows to the rear elevation are at first floor level and have modern uPVC windows with security metal bars over them. There is also a small porch, with a sloping slate roof which sits above the rear door. This area is accessed through a narrow back passage between no. 39 High Street and the rear part of the Peacocks Building.
- 4.4.8. The visible section of the south facing side elevation (**Plate 8**) has seen alteration, given that the building plane varies (it is stepped in places). These changes likely occurred when the Peacocks Building was constructed in the 1960s.



Plate 7: Rear elevation of Monique's Building at no. 38 High Street. Note the narrow back passage.



Plate 8: South facing side elevation of Monique's Building. Note that the first-floor elevation to the Peacocks Building is evident (marked by red arrow).

Peacocks Building

- 4.4.9. The Peacocks Building (**Plate 3**) is a large 1960s building which comprises two storeys. The ground floor frontage to the High Street (west) elevation projects slightly forward of the first floor. The ground floor shop front comprises glazing set in aluminium frames. The first floor has smaller high level metal framed windows running the full width of the elevation, with a largely render face below.
- 4.4.10. The building first appears dates from the 1960s and comprises a large L-plan in footprint terms, which extends to the rear beyond and behind the buildings to the south (**Plate 9**). The footprint of the building remains relatively unchanged since its construction.



Plate 9: Rear of the Peacocks Building facing south-west. Note that this picture is taken from the Railway Station.

British Red Cross Building

- 4.4.11. The British Red Cross Building (**Plate 4**) occupies the southern part of the Site. It comprises two storeys, with the southernmost part of the building having a diagonal building plane that projects slightly forward of the northern part of the building. There are two modern shopfronts at ground level, although both served a large single retail space at ground level. The doorway at the southern end of the shop front to no. 34, serves a separate staircase which provides access to the first floor.
- 4.4.12. The building has a deeply moulded bracketed cornice at the first floor, which overhangs the main building plane. A rendered pilaster remains at first floor level with an ornate capital, which is a remnant of an earlier design. The building has large wooden casement windows at first floor level, which almost occupy the entire length of this elevation. However, the windows to the first floor of no. 34, have had their upper casements infilled, so they appear smaller than those of nos. 35 and 36.



Plate 10: South facing side elevation to the British Red Cross Building (centre). Note that part of the rear elevation to the Peacocks Building is also evident (right).

Grade II Listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451)

- 4.4.13. The Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451: **Plate 11**) was designated on 28 August 1975. The building has architectural and historic significance and is located approximately 10 metres to the north-west of the Site. The Cadw list description for the chapel states:

'Bold neo-classical front of 3 bays, painted render with advanced, pedimented centre, parapets to side bays, gable crucifix. Bracket cornice, band course under recessed "High Street Chapel" tablet, deep cornice over banded rusticated ground-floor. Pediments to outer first-floor windows with leaded glazing, plain ground-floor windows. Monumental central entrance with plain arch to later vaulted porch breaking through cornice, detached Doric columns to jambs, twin pilasters flank segmental inner doorway. One-bay return flanks in similar style, then 4-bay simple walls with plain bands and round headed upper windows with tracery'.¹²

¹² <https://cadwpublic-api.azurewebsites.net/reports/listedbuilding/FullReport?lang=&id=11451>

- 4.4.14. The rapidly swelling population within Merthyr Tydfil in the early 19th century and the mixing of new people across England and Wales introduced new religious beliefs to the town. The new industrial growth also brought abundant wealth and as result of both these factors several non-conformist chapels were built in the Pontmorlais area at the north of High Street. The distance of these buildings from the traditional centre of worship at St Tydfil's Church may be intentional, as a symbol of their independence¹⁴.
- 4.4.15. Despite this the non-conformist congregations continued to grow, which led to the need to purchase the site where High Street Chapel was to be built in 1840. It stands on the site of an old brewery and is the oldest English language Baptist chapel in Merthyr Tydfil¹⁵.
- 4.4.16. It is noted within the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal that important public buildings such as places of worship were built with space between them and the pavement to provide separation from the busy street, normally marked with railings surrounding a grassed yard or raised terrace such as at the High Street Baptist Chapel. These buildings are mostly detached, if only separated from their neighbours by a few feet, which emphasises their status and separateness from the commercial area surrounding them¹⁶.

¹⁴ Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

¹⁵<https://www.highstreetbaptistchurch.co.uk/history#:~:text=Our%20History,Baptist%20Union%20of%20Great%20Britain.>



Plate 11: Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451) taken from High Street, facing south-west.

Other Grade II Listed Buildings in Study Area

4.4.17. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings in the study area, which have limited to no intervisibility with the Site. These historic assets have been scoped out of the assessment as their settings would not be impacted by the Proposal. These are:

- Barclays Bank (Cadw 11437), located at 47 High Street.
- Crown Inn (Cadw 11436), located at 28 High Street.
- St Tydfil's Church (Cadw 11449), located at the southern end of High Street.
- Gates & Railways at St Tydfil's Churchyard (Cadw 11450), located at the southern end of High Street.
- Iron Fountain Canopy (Cadw 11448), located at the southern end of High Street.

5 Statement of Significance

5.1 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area

- 5.1.1. The key characteristics of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre CA are as follows:
- A town centre developed from the late 18th century as a result of rapid and massive development and population growth continuing to function as the district's main high street shopping area.
 - The concentration of commercial, civic, social and spiritual uses relating to the development of Merthyr Tydfil as an industrial town of international importance between the late 18th and early 20th centuries.
 - Landmark buildings of particular architectural quality, which emphasise each of the historic functions of the conservation area.
 - Dense urban development of mainly narrow frontages on the backs of pavements creating varied elevations and a noticeable sense of enclosure.
 - A strong linear form created by the long axis of Penydarren Road, Pontmorlais High Street, with numerous short side streets providing ready access to and from surrounding areas.
 - Attractive views along street lines to focal points, landmark buildings and out to mountain scenery.
 - A variety of architectural styles and materials.
- 5.1.2. In historic terms, the designation reflects the changing nature of Merthyr Tydfil during the 19th century, with the opening of the Iron Works and the expansion of the settlement to reflect this. The railway was also an important part of the infrastructure associated with the works, and the remnant infrastructure associated with the railway contributes to the significance and setting of the designation. As the Site lies within the conservation area the setting of the designation also contributes to its heritage value.
- 5.1.3. The historic asset is of **medium significance** as a conservation area with a number notable Grade II listed buildings that reflect the early development of Merthyr Tydfil.

Monique's Building

- 5.1.4. The principal west elevation to the 19th century Monique's Building makes a positive contribution to the designation in streetscape terms. The building has historical and some aesthetic value. Little change appears to have occurred to the building's principal west elevation, although it is in a poor state of repair and has been structurally compromised. The rear (east) and side (south) elevations have seen greater intervention, which has diminished the heritage value of the building. The building is considered to be of **low significance**.

Peacocks Building

- 5.1.5. The Peacocks Building was built in the 1960s and is considered to be of **no heritage value**.

British Red Cross Building

- 5.1.6. The exact date of construction of the British Red Cross Building has not been determined but elements survive from the early 20th century. The building has some aesthetic value externally, albeit with notable changes that have diminished its architectural quality. It retains its deeply moulded bracketed cornice and a deeply rusticated rendered pilaster, both at first floor level. The Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre CA Appraisal notes these as important elements, although it is acknowledged that the principal west elevation has been heavily compromised by later 20th century alterations. With this in mind, the building is deemed to be of **low significance**.

5.2 Grade II Listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451)

- 5.2.1. The Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (**Plate 11**) is a designated historic asset of **high significance**. It has aesthetic value through its bold neo-classical design. Its grand scale illustrates the importance of non-conformist chapels within Merthyr Tydfil and in Wales in general. It has historical value as the first English language Baptist chapel in Merthyr Tydfil. The chapel also has communal value as it holds a place in the collective memory of some, given its continuous use as a chapel.
- 5.2.2. The principal east elevation fronting High Street is seen in the context of a commercial setting (**Plate 12**). It is set back from the street, with iron railings mounted on a boundary wall surrounding it. It has prominence in the context of other buildings within the street, given its distinctive principal façade, which is symmetrical in appearance and has a number of notable features including pediments to the first-floor windows. The first-floor windows also have leaded glazing. At ground level the central entrance with plain arch to later vaulted porch is also notable.



Plate 12: Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church (Cadw 11451) taken from High Street, facing south-west and showing its position on High Street.

6 Proposed Development and Potential Impact on Historic Assets

6.1 Proposed Development

6.1.1. The Proposed Development presents the opportunity to introduce an open and inviting route from the High Street to the Railway Station. The Merthyr Interchange Link Project proposes the demolition of a number of buildings (nos. 34-38 High Street) to allow for a new access route. The Proposal includes the construction of a new building on the site of Monique's Building in a similar architectural style. The route will be accessible by pedestrians and cyclists to provide a vibrant and lively public realm space. This will contribute to the much-needed regeneration of the town centre and perform an important role for the local community and visitors of Merthyr Tydfil.

6.1.2. The Proposal includes the following:

Demolition

- Demolition of Monique's Building.
- Demolition of the Peacocks building.
- Demolition of the British Red Cross Building.

Public Realm

- Introduction of new public realm space between Masonic Street and High Street.
- Relocation of existing substation.
- Re-building on the site of the Monique's Building to provide an attractive corner building.

6.2 Potential Impacts on Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area

6.2.1. The demolition of three buildings (Monique's, Peacocks and British Red Cross) will create a gap in the existing terrace along High Street. There has been development historically to this part of the High Street since at the least the mid-19th century. This aspect of the Proposal will visually alter the appearance of the designation, although it is noted that the existing buildings are either in a poor state of disrepair (Monique's Building) or contribute little to the character and appearance of the conservation area. With this in mind, this aspect of the proposal will result in a **low level of harm** on the significance and setting of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre CA.

6.2.2. It is also noted that the lower part of the High Street currently includes underutilised and derelict buildings (such as the Peacocks Building) that lack any architectural quality. The Proposal is focused on strategic renewal and ensuring long term sustainability of the High Street environment. The new public realm works will integrate with the High Street, providing a link between the public transport hub and the commercial precinct. The

landscaping strategy introduces green elements, nurtures biodiversity, and enhances the streetscape along this new transient space. The public realm will function as an extension of the commercial spaces, providing breakout and outdoor areas.

Monique's Building

- 6.2.3. It is acknowledged that the 19th century building has some aesthetic and historic value, which is considered to be at a local level of significance in its own right. The demolition of the building will result in its total loss, which will cause a **moderate level of harm**.
- 6.2.4. The proposed demolition of the building has been driven by its current condition, which means it is not economically viable to retain it. There is extensive damage to key structural elements of the building (as outlined in the Structural Inspection Report, September 2024¹⁷). An outline planning application will seek to recreate Monique's Victorian style in a purpose-built corner plot that interacts with the High Street and the newly formed public realm. This will reduce the level of harm associated with its demolition. An appropriate level of recording prior to demolition would also mitigate the level of harm identified.

Peacocks Building

- 6.2.5. The Peacocks Building is of no heritage value and its loss will result in **no harm**.

British Red Cross Building

- 6.2.6. The British Red Cross Building has seen notable change and is considered to be of a low level of heritage significance. Its demolition will result in a **low level of harm**.
- 6.2.7. In its current condition the building is considered to be of limited aesthetic value and adds little in visual terms to the High Street. An appropriate level of recording would mitigate the level of harm identified.

6.3 Potential Impacts on the Setting of Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church

- 6.3.1. While there will be no physical impact on the historic asset, the Proposal will result in a small change to its setting. The public realm works represent an enhancement and the significance and setting of the historic asset will not be impacted.

¹⁷ Merthyr Interchange Link: Monique's Building, Lower High Street – Structural Inspection Report, September 2024

7 Conclusion and recommendations

7.1 Summary

- 7.1.1. This HS has been prepared following the principles set out in the PPW and in line with relevant national and local guidance and best practice. It has identified impacts associated with the Proposed Development on the significance and setting of the Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre CA.

7.2 Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area

- 7.2.1. The Proposal will result in a **low level of harm** on the significance and setting of the wider designation. However, the new public realm works represent an enhancement opportunity, given that they aim to renew this part of the High Street.

Monique's Building

- 7.2.2. The demolition of the building will result in a **moderate level of harm** when considered in isolation. This building dates from the 19th century and makes a positive contribution to the High Street, although it is noted that it is in a poor state of disrepair. It is recommended that the building is recorded to an appropriate standard prior to demolition, which will mitigate the level of harm identified.

Peacocks Building

- 7.2.3. The demolition of the building will result in **no harm**. This building dates from the mid-20th century and is of no heritage value.

British Red Cross Building

- 7.2.4. The demolition of the building will result in a **low level of harm** when considered in isolation. The building has been heavily compromised architecturally, although it is noted that there are some redeemable features at first floor level to the principal High Street elevation. It is recommended that the building is recorded to an appropriate standard prior to demolition, which will mitigate the level of harm identified.

7.3 Grade II listed High Street Baptist Church

- 7.3.1. The Proposal will result in a minor change to the setting of the historic asset. The change represents an enhancement and there will be no harm to its significance and setting.

Appendix A

References

WSP

Published and documentary sources

Cadw. (2011). *Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Heritage Environment in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Cadw. (2017). *Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Cadw. (2017). *Managing Change to Registered Historic Parks and Gardens in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Cadw. (2017). *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales*. Cardiff: Welsh Government.

Cadw. (2015) Merthyr Tydfil: Understanding Urban Character

Davis, A, N. (2009) Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal

Historic UK. (2024). *The English Invasion of Wales*. Retrieved from <https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofWales/The-English-conquest-of-Wales/>

Welsh Government. (2023), *Historic Environment (Wales) Act*.

Welsh Government. (2017). *Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24: The Historic Environment*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan24-historic-environment.pdf>

Welsh Government. (2021). *Planning Policy Edition 11*. Retrieved from Planning Policy Edition 11, Av https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-11_0.pdf

Welsh Government. (2024) *Planning Policy Wales 12th Edition*.

WSP. (2024) Merthyr Interchange Link Design & Access Statement

Other sources

Cadw designation data

Glamorgan Archives

CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

Ordnance Survey mapping from the 1st edition to the present day.

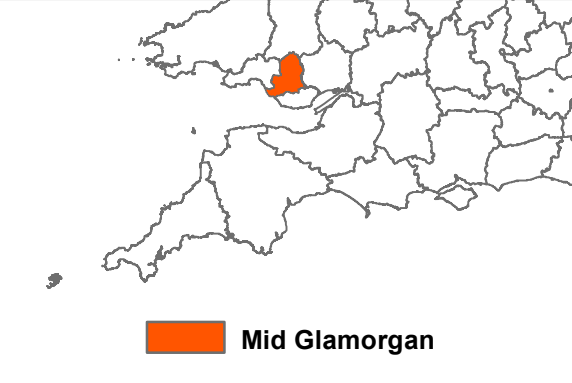
Tithe Map and Apportionment 1850

Appendix B

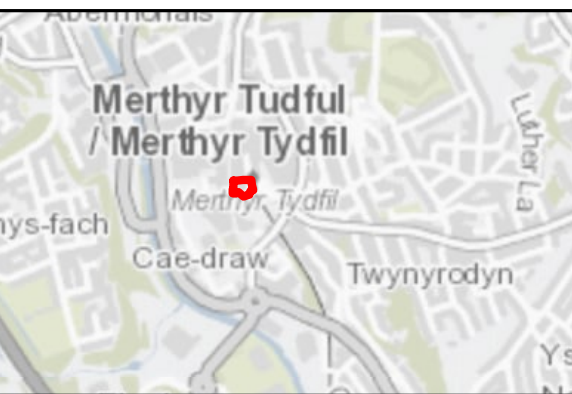
Figures

WSP

205850
Document Path: \\uk\wspgroup.com\UK\central\Environmental\ARCHAEOLOGY\WALE\High Street, Merthyr Tydfil\Graphics\MXD\Figure 1.mxd
205920
205990
206060
Date Saved: 12/19/2024

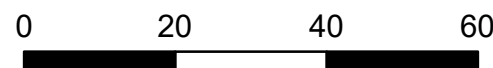


Mid Glamorgan



Key

Site Boundary



Metres



Client:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

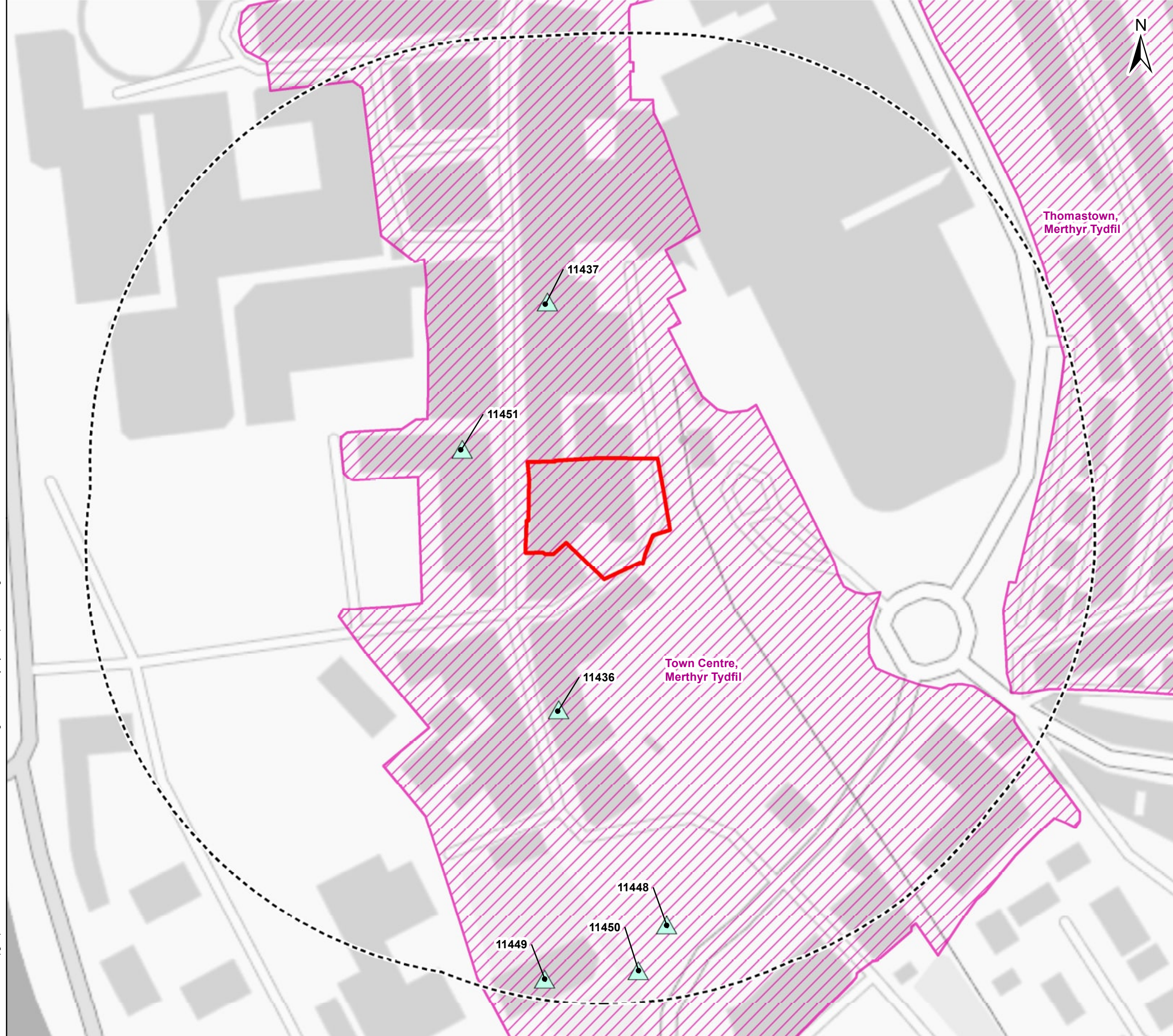
Project:

High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Title

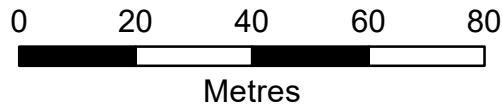
Figure 1
Site Location Plan

Date:	12/19/2024	Scale:	1,000 @ A3
Drawn:	UT	Checked:	AB
		Approved:	CC



Key

- Site Boundary
- Study Area (150m)
- Grade II listed buildings
- Conservation Area



Client:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project:

High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Title

Figure 2
Designated Built Heritage Assets

Date:

12/19/2024

Scale: 1,300 @ A3

Drawn:

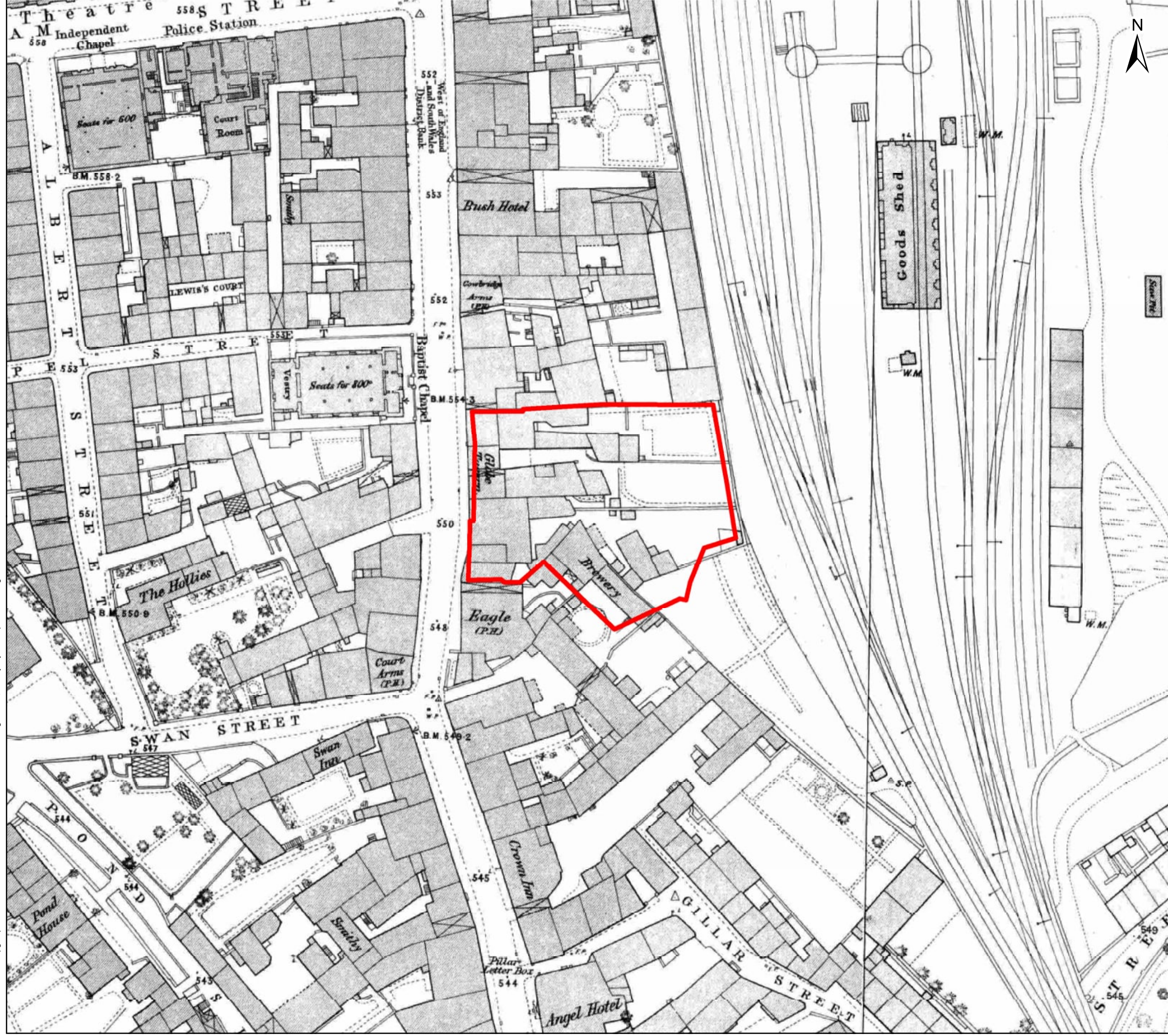
UT

Checked:

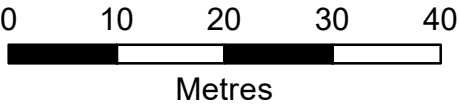
AB

Approved:

CC



Key
Site Boundary

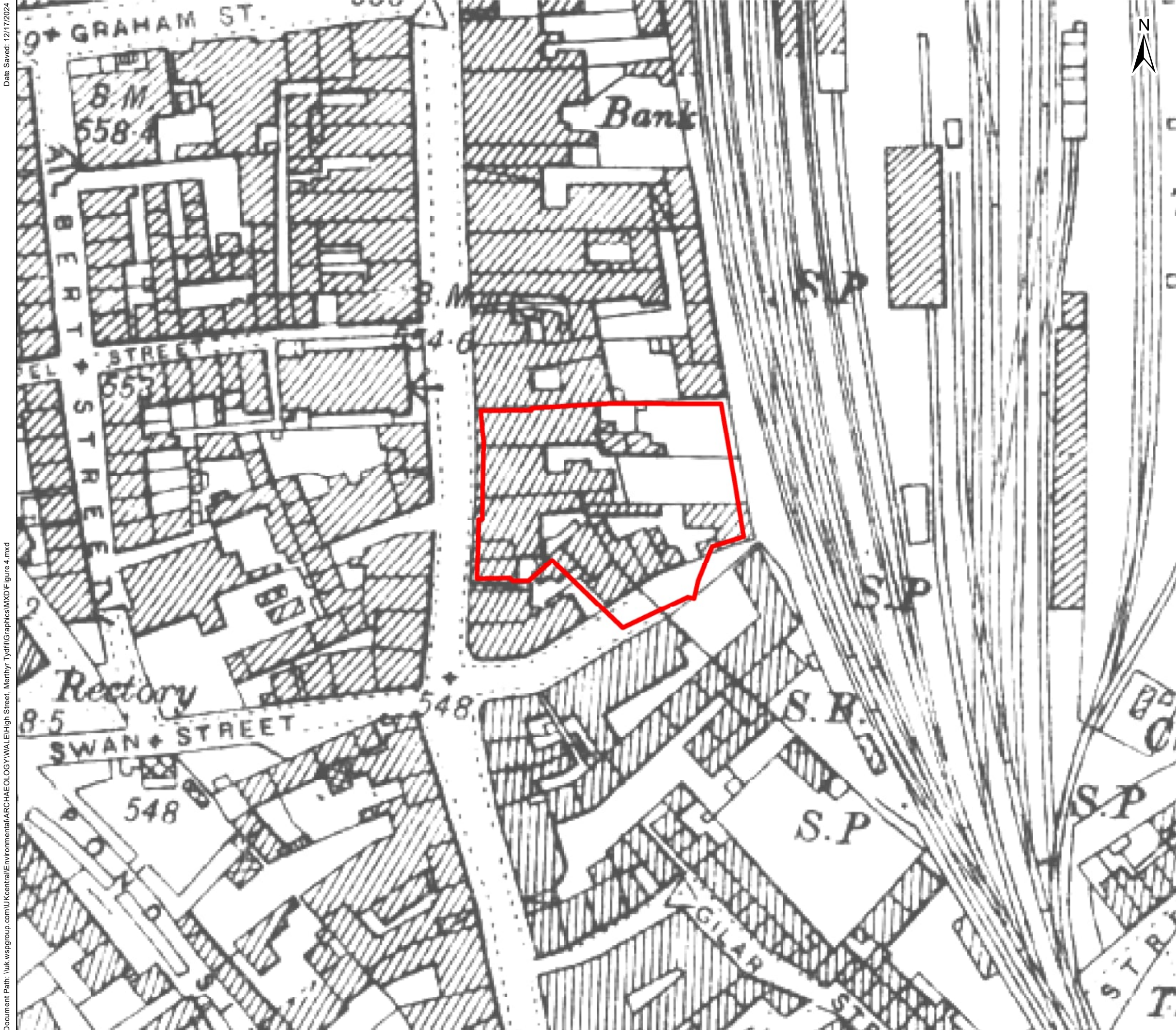


Client:
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project:
High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

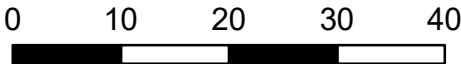
Title:
Figure 3: Ordnance Survey map
1:500 of 1875(not to scale)

Date: 12/19/2024 Scale: 700 @ A3
Drawn: UT Checked: AB Approved: CC



Key

 Site Boundary



Metres



Client:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project:

High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Title

Figure 4: Ordnance Survey map
1:2500 of 1900 (not to scale)

Date:

12/19/2024

Scale: 700 @ A3

Drawn:

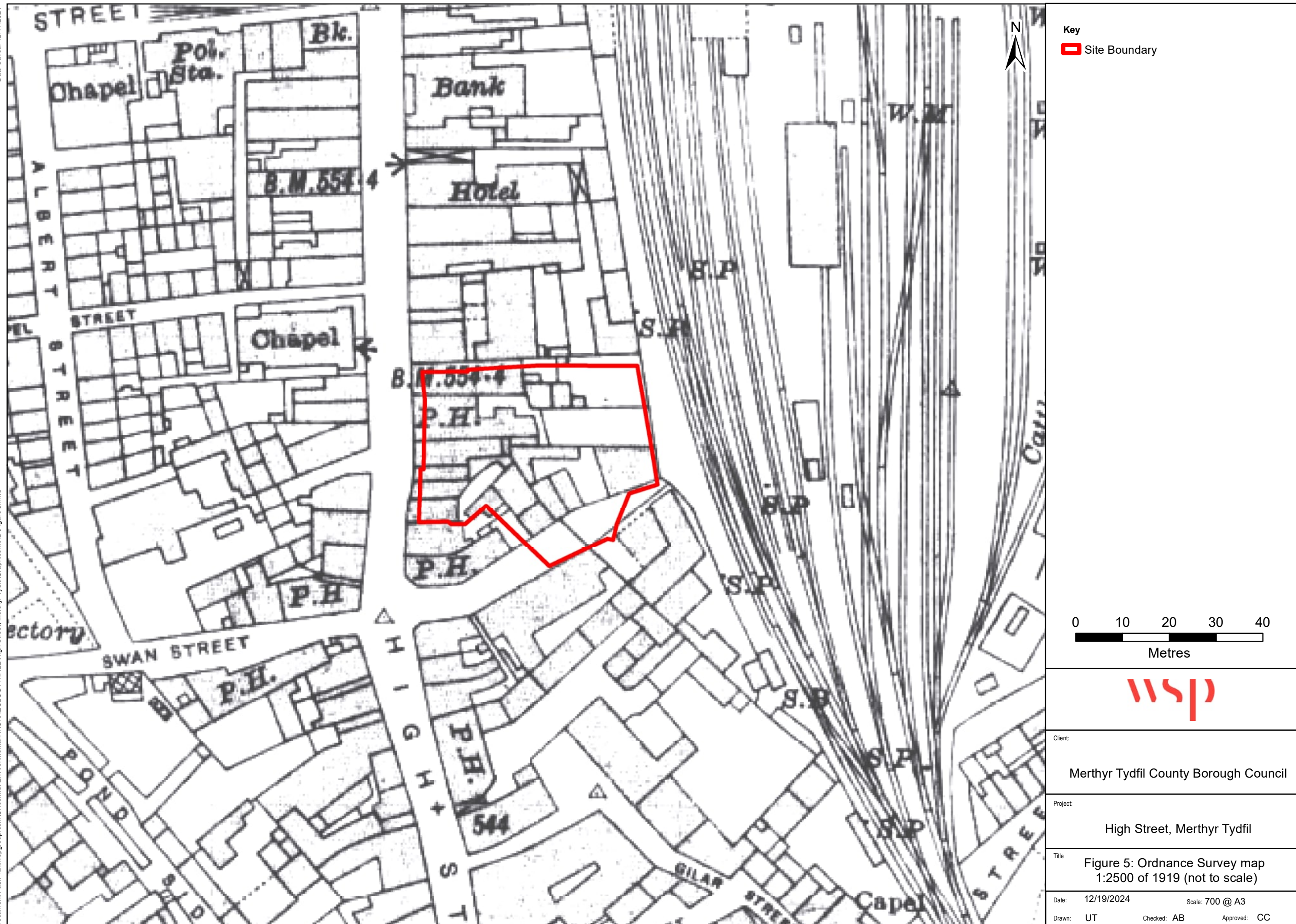
UT

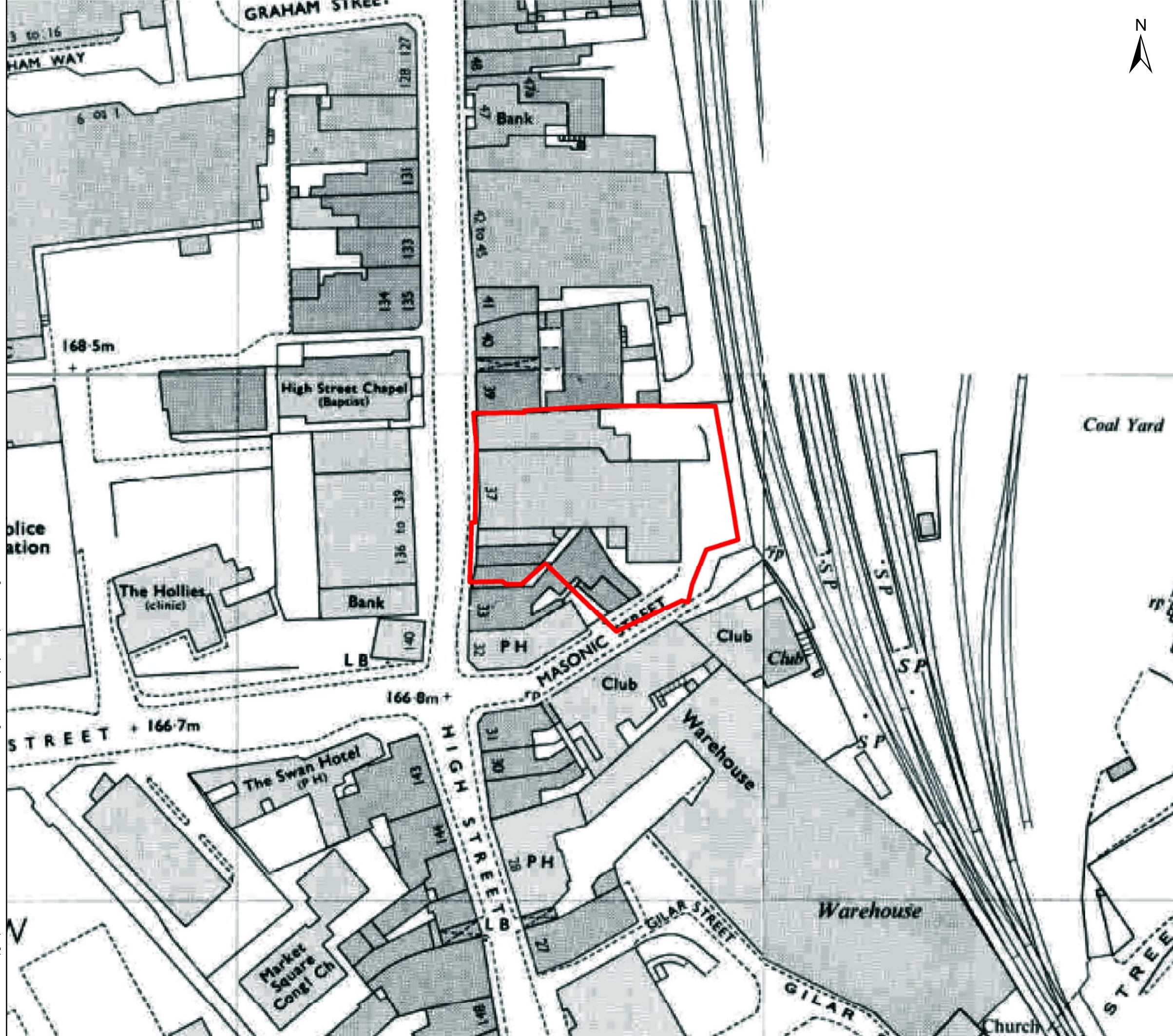
Checked:

AB

Approved:

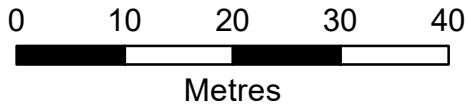
CC





Key

 Site Boundary



Client:

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

Project:

High Street, Merthyr Tydfil

Title

Figure 6: Ordnance Survey map
1:1,250 of 1969-75 (not to scale)

Date:

12/19/2024

Scale: 700 @ A3

Drawn:

UT

Checked: AB

Approved: CC



8 First Street
Manchester
M15 4RP

wsp.com

WSP UK Limited makes no warranties or guarantees, actual or implied, in relation to this report, or the ultimate commercial, technical, economic, or financial effect on the project to which it relates, and bears no responsibility or liability related to its use other than as set out in the contract under which it was supplied.