APPENDIX 1

Bridgend County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwdeistref Sirol Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr

CAERAU WARD HOUSING RENEWAL AREA

DESIGN GUIDE

PROPERTIES, COMMUNITY BUILDINGS AND SHOP FRONTS

ESW/27.05.2010

CONTENTS

		Page
1.	INTRODUCTION	2
2.	DESIGN APPROACH	5
3.	DESIGN NOTES	10
	1 - Domestic Properties	11
	2 - Heritage Design	15
	3 - Community and Social Buildings	17
	4 - Shop Fronts	19

1. INTRODUCTION

The housing stock found in Neighbourhood Renewal Area schemes, is generally older brick and stone built terraced houses constructed in the late 1880's and early 1900's.

Houses typical to the Valley areas were originally constructed of stone front walls with timber sliding sash windows, slate roofs with shared chimneys and cast iron gutters. To the rear, the properties had a shared rear extension and a lean to outhouse/coal shed.

Over the years properties have been altered and in the majority of cases the roofs have been replaced with concrete interlocking tiles, chimneys have been demolished, windows have been replaced mainly with double glazed uPVC and rear extensions have been added or enlarged. Further, it is common for the gap at the rear between properties to have been in filled with a conservatory to form an outer kitchen.

In most cases improvements have been made to upgrade and improve thermal performance and comfort such as double glazed, sealed windows and render to water proof walls. However, it is common that works carried out, particularly to the rear of properties is not to a good standard and may not comply with building regulations.

The purpose of this Design Guide is to inform Contractors, residents and staff of the characteristics of properties and surrounding areas within the Caerau Ward Housing Renewal Area. The Guide has been informed by experience from previous years housing renewal area schemes undertaken within the Caerau Ward Housing Renewal Area since declaration in September 2006.

<u>The Caerau Ward</u>

The Caerau Ward consists of two villages Carau and Nantyffyllon. As the age of housing along the Llynfi valley varies there are changes to traditional styles. In Nantyffyllon stone was used more frequently, chimneys and opening reveals were often constructed of stone.

Brick was introduced and was being used for chimneys and opening reveals further up the valley towards Caerau and in some cases main front walls were constructed of brick as seen in Woodlands and Talana Terrace in Caerau.

Due to the topography of the Llynfi Valley the front of some properties open directly onto the street as others have small front gardens with walls and railings. Such streets as Picton Street in Nantyffyllon, the properties are built

into the hillside and the front walls act as retaining walls with steep steps leading to the front doors.

Over the years improvements have been carried out by individual property owners in the Caerau Ward with no uniform approach. As a result, the traditional street scene has changed. This is particularly obvious with the changes to roofs and front boundary walls. The main defects found with the existing design, construction and maintenance include:

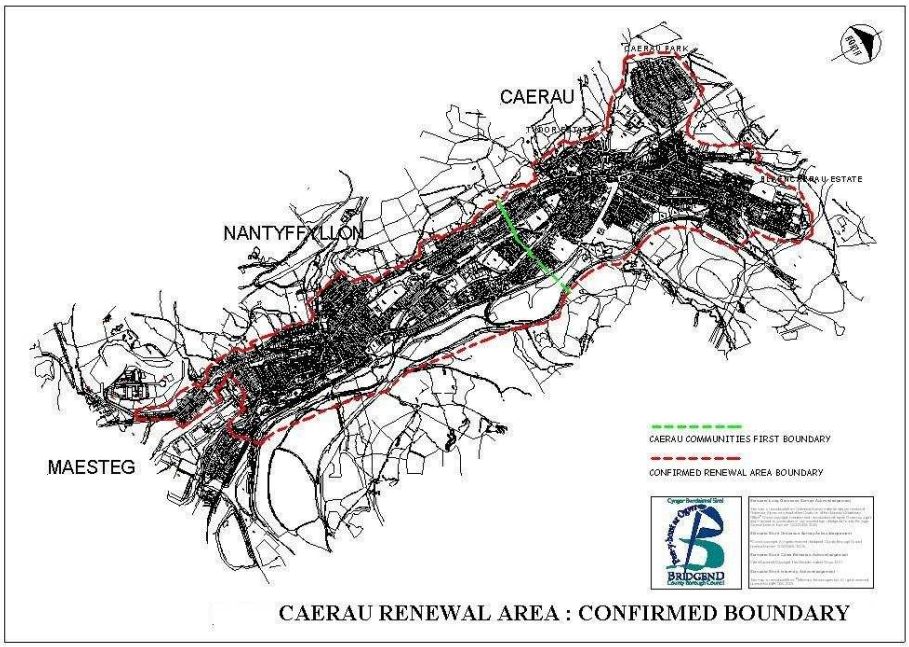
- Inadequate number rainwater gutters and downpipes
- Lack of rainwater drainage away from properties
- Water penetration
- Badly maintained windows
- Defective roof timbers often caused by overloading from concrete roofing tiles
- Localised areas of subsidence or deflection in walls
- Inadequate fire separation between properties

Although the aim of the neighbourhood renewal scheme is to improve and upgrade properties it is not to rectify defective work that has previously been undertaken.

There is a need for an overall vision for Caerau and Nantyffyllon that sets the context for enhancement. The improvement of the existing built environment will help enhance that vision.

The replacement of roofs, gutters and fascias and boundary walls as seen in Talana, and Woodlands Terrace, Bedw, Magazine and Picton Street and Hermon Road undertaken over the past 5 years of the renewal area programme, have enhanced the street scene as well as improving individual properties.

The outline of the Caerau Ward Housing Renewal Area that includes the villages of Nantyffyllon and Caerau is shown below. The green line is the boundary of the Communities first area in Caerau.



2. DESIGN APPROACH

The key approach to design is to:

- Work to maintain the existing local character of groups of houses and blocks or streets to retain the dominant house types and aesthetics, i.e. brick, stone or render, reflecting the original construction materials.

- Maintain the dominant and appropriate (slate) roofing materials replacing inappropriate and over heavy concrete tiles so much a feature of earlier repairs.

- Maintain and or replace chimneys (vital to good ventilation on older properties) where a given block or street has a reasonable proportion of chimneys retained, or make design decisions to suit the majority of previous changes.

- Use sympathetic window styles to maintain or introduce appropriate scale to the elevations given the need to maintain or introduce double glazing. The top vent style should only be used where windows open directly over pavements (usually as a replacement for sash windows).

- Introduce appropriate levels of rainwater pipes (often inadequate on runs of terrace house) and ensue that rainwater is taken away from properties to reduce the problems of rising damp. Rainwater pipes can also add vertical scale to long run of houses.

- Repair existing front paved gardens with enclosing walls and railings and gates.

Achieving basic levels of soundness and comfort is one of the main priorities in designing for housing renewal areas. It is regarded as the basic outcome for the well-being of local residents.

Chimneys

The retention and replacement of chimneys is considered to be an element of the soundness of a property. Chimneys, coupled with a solid fuel or log-burning stove, offer some flexibility in terms of the fuel used to warm houses and is an enhancement of sustainability as it provides resilience for space heating at time of energy supply uncertainty.

An open flue, particularly when there is a fire burning helps reduce the build-up of condensation during winter months. In the summer, warm air is drawn up the flue, pulling fresh air into the house through windows and vents.

Where in a block, the majority of chimneys have been demolished then remaining redundant chimneys in the street would be demolished rather than replaced. Chimneys should be retained or rebuilt if part of a heritage scheme or the street or block of houses would benefit from replacement.

Where residents' are venting a gas boiler through chimneys these will be fitted with gas terminal vents.

Roofs

Manufactured slates rather than interlocking concrete tiles are recommended for roofs. The weight of the latter can adversely affect the support structure. Manufactured fibre-cement reconstituted composite slates are to be considered to be acceptable in weight terms, but with a 30 year plus life expectancy.

Within the roof void separating walls between properties are up-graded to improve fire protection. In the event of fire, this reduces the ability of fire to spread to neighbouring properties through the roof void.

Improvements to roof insulation in flat roofs are difficult to achieve without considerable works to the upgrade the roof and finishes. Ruberoid or EPDM Sheet or GRP should be used for replacing flat roofs or corrugated sheet roofs where appropriate.

Rain Water Goods / Fascias and Gutters

Replacement guttering and downpipes are usually now of PVCu, although occasionally extruded aluminium is used as a more sustainable product. These materials are not as robust as cast iron or cast aluminium, and are more likely to be damaged by snow at eaves or vandalism at street level.

Robust rainwater goods are part of the soundness and durability of houses and consideration should be given to the use of cast aluminium to prolong durability and sustainability with little maintenance. Downpipes on front elevations facing directly on to a road will generally be cast aluminium and double clipped for extra durability.

Adequate, efficient, and robust rainwater goods are essential to the soundness of houses, since damp problems associated with leaking gutters or downpipes are a serious source of building deterioration.

Walls

For solid-walled houses of stone or brick the most durable material for all pointing or render is a lime mortar. Although 'Portland Cement' was invented in 1824 it did not come into general use until after the first world war. Lime mortar is more permeable to water vapour than cement. Contrary to expectation, a lime pointed or rendered house is likely to be less damp than cement rendered property. Lime allows the walls to 'breathe' with water evaporating from the outside face after rain or if water has got into the wall by other means – such as water vapour from the interior. Hard cement pointing and or render can trap water in the wall. This can lead to failure of the render, spalling of brick or stonework, or the appearance of damp patches inside the house.

Where a cement pointed or rendered property has damp problems, and obvious causes such as leaking gutters or downpipes can be ruled out, the solution may well be to remove all cement pointing and render from the exterior of the building, and to repair the building with lime mortars.

The insertion of chemical damp proof courses in houses with walls of solid stone is ineffective, and is a waste of money.

Re-pointing of stone and brickwork should only be considered if the need is evident – for example where the old mortar is very soft or loose, or has weathered out, leaving open or deeply recessed joints vulnerable to water penetration. The pointing should be flush or slightly recessed. It should not be spread over the face of adjacent stonework and absolutely should not stand proud of the stones or brick (ribbon pointing) as such pointing, particularly in hard cement mortar, can trap water and cause significant damage to the structure of the building.

Any existing cement mortar ribbon pointing should be replaced as a matter of urgency. The joints should be raked out to a depth of between 25mm and 40mm, or at least twice the height of the joint, but care needs to be taken not to damage adjacent stones or bricks, or to increase the width of joints. The replacement pointing mix should be compatible with the type and strength of the stones or bricks, and be suitable for the degree of weather exposure. A rough guide would be a proportion of approximately 1:3 of binding agent (moderately hydraulic lime) to aggregate (sharp sand, well washed and graded).

Contemporary proposals to enhance insulation by, for example, the addition of an external insulating layer with a ‘protective cement render coat’ need careful thought and consideration of the problems that might be caused.

External insulation may be an appropriate treatment for one wall of a dwelling (the gable end, for example) provided the front and back walls are of ‘breathable’ construction and adequate ventilation is provided, but it is a matter that should have expert attention. Before adding external insulation to a house that has a cement render finish, consideration can be given to the warmer feel that can be created by a dryer lime-mortar rendered wall

Works to walls depend on the condition and material finish of the existing walls. Where walls are pointed stone these should be re-pointed. Rendered walls should be re-painted unless the render is in such poor condition that replacement is necessary.

External insulation schemes have been applied to the end of terraced properties or specific blocks of properties.

Windows and Doors

The replacement of windows and doors requires consideration of the following points:

- Draft proofing
- Adequate ventilation to prevent a build-up of humidity
- The opportunity to create strong through-ventilation to cope with extreme summer weather
- Double glazing, secondary glazing, insulated internal shutters, or heavy curtains to cope with extreme winter weather
- Ease of escape in case of fire
- Methods of opening that do not present a hazard to footway users
- Security
- Durability and sustainable materials

The use of uPVC windows is widespread and the most likely window type found in domestic properties. The relatively long life in use (now 40 years +) and low consumer maintenance makes these a cost effective choice. Added to this is the industry wide adoption of production waste and end of life recycling.

In addition, the most common forms of low cost window use top vents over a large fixed glass pane and this can be a substantial impediment to escape in emergency because of the absence of an adequate size opening and the difficulty of breaking through the double-glazed main window. Such windows should be replaced with a design allowing emergency exit even if the existing window is structurally sound.

Timber frames should only be considered in certain schemes where modern factory treated timber (such as acetylated timber - Accoya) or Vac-Vac treatment can be specified. Timber’s disadvantage is the need for regular periodic painting to maintain the protection of the wood frame, and for this

reason any fitment of timber windows should also provide a maintenance schedule identifying the areas for annual inspection and the specification for repainting. The benefits of using timber windows is that they are made of renewable sustainable materials, are more stable, are capable of simple repair, are better looking and more resilient to alterations, are less polluting, and should prove cheaper over a whole-life costing.

Experience however shows that the use of painted timber windows of whatever specification is poorly taken up by residents and where they are installed regular maintenance is neglected.

Single glazed timber, aluminium or steel framed windows found within block/group repair schemes are currently replaced with white uPVC double glazed windows. Generally existing double glazed uPVC windows will be retained unless they are in very poor condition. Where the seals in the double glazed panes of glass have failed then the glass will be replaced, ideally with 'Low E' compliant units. It is possible to obtain double glazed replacement panes to fit small profile uPVC windows.

Poor main back or front doors are replaced with white uPVC 'Secure by Design' doors, fitted with toughened glass.

Replacement front doors should incorporate multi-locking points. Where fanlights are part of the original building the use of a solid panel door can achieve the optimum security, but if additional light to the hall is required the addition of glazed lights to the upper door panels is possible, and such doors can be sourced to 'secured by design' standards.

Front Boundary Walls and Fences

Some houses have small forecourts. For the comfort of residents there are advantages to expressing the private nature of the forecourt by reinstating walls, railings, and garden gates where these have been lost or damaged over time. The railed forecourt creates a transition zone between the fully public space of the street and the fully private interior of the house to increase the householder's sense of security.

Where walls are to be replaced in a street, these will generally be constructed of red engineering brick with galvanised 'ball top' railings and gates.

Where possible, rainwater downpipes will discharge into gullies or pipes taken through the boundary wall. This is to help drain rainwater away from the property.

The pictures below show previous works undertaken in the Caerau Ward and demonstrate designs and materials used for roofs, rainwater goods, walls, windows, doors, boundary walls and railings.

Design Examples

Hermon Road

Bedw Street

Picton Street

Tywith Cottages

Caerau Road

Hermon Road

3. DESIGN NOTES

1. **DOMESTIC ROPERTIES**

2. **HERITAGE RESTORATION**

3. **COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL BUILDINGS**

4. **SHOP FRONTS**

1. DOMESTIC PROPERTIES

Enhancing the Appearance of Properties

Enhancing the appearance of domestic dwellings is not straight forward, because the definition of an enhanced appearance will have subjective elements, on top of the basic requirement that properties should look well-maintained, cared-for and reduce long term maintenance. Further, enhancements should improve thermal performance, and where possible access and egress.

There is enhancement in the eyes of the property owner. Not everybody has the same appreciation of visual quality. Elements that owners may think of as enhancements for example:

- multi-coloured stone cladding on brick houses;
- rustic half-timbering;
- red pantiles;
- wide picture windows;
- wood-effect plastic frames with gold glazing bars – are understandable in terms of improvements they may have for the owner. But in terms of the overall the renewal programme, they may not improve an area.

Some improvements can also be detrimental to the structure of the dwelling, for example, stone cladding and concrete interlocking roof tiles.

The property owner is key to any enhancement, and their view and opinion needs to be accommodated. The owner can always decide not to join in a scheme or undertake any improvement works. This must be considered as often one property that has not been improved in a street can significantly reduce the overall impact of the scheme.

The aim of improvement schemes is to gain 100% resident take up to maximise the overall impact on an area. Resident's views need to be taken into account to ensure they take part in the scheme.

Improvement work should aim to upgrade basic levels of soundness and comfort in a home and be compatible with the original design of the property and should aim to achieve a sixty year life span and with appropriate repair and renewal are capable of a similar or longer life.

It is important that work is done to a good standard, and where appropriate, using traditional materials and detailing, and some aspects of a heritage approach. However, the restoration of all chimneys and use of natural slate will be expensive. Design will need to be balanced against overall cost effectiveness and impact.

It is questionable whether a heritage approach will in practice enhance the character of the area as a whole, although opportunities for the enhancement of

individual properties to a high degree are there. There are several reasons why the area as a whole is unlikely to be enhanced:

- With high individual costs for complete restoration only a small number of properties are likely to be affected. As the original appearance of almost the entire housing stock has been changed by previous improvements and alterations. It might, however, be possible to identify a street or a group of houses that could be restored as an exemplar, with the consent and support of the building owners.

- The original buildings in the Caerau Ward are not of the highest intrinsic heritage interest. The OS maps of 1885, 1900, and 1921 are instructive in that they show that much of the building in the area is post-Victorian. The terraced houses have little decoration, and the streets in dark stone, with often dark brick details and brown-painted windows, would have had a dour look. If it were possible through restoration to turn back the clock on a widespread basis, the character of the area could well be unattractive, a dark industrial place where the dismal outlook of buildings did nothing to relieve the often damp and grey climate.

The alternative to a heritage approach is more difficult, in that it needs the definition of a vision for the future of Nantyffyllon and Caerau. The natural setting of the settlement is a wide moorland bowl at the head of the Llynfi Valley. With the removal of mining and heavy industry, and ongoing works for the restoration of the landscape, it is an area of potential beauty. There are opportunities for countryside recreation, with, for example, cycle track development in progress. The area is a gateway to Bridgend County Borough from the north. It is also very accessible from the south, with the railway from Cardiff reaching Maesteg and road linkage from the M4.

Roofs

Natural slate is not a viable economic roofing material, due to cost and a good quality blue-black fibre cement slate should be used. It has the merit of being consistent with natural slate in colour. It is also closer to the texture of natural slate than, for example, interlocking concrete tiles. The original roof structures were designed to take slates. Concrete interlocking tiles are three times heavier than slates, and replacement of roofs with concrete interlocking tiles has caused deflection in the roof structure.

In the valley context, where roofs are often overseen from a height, the approximate consistency of colour and texture will help the visual coherence of the area, and will counterbalance more substantial variations in appearance, should the heritage restoration approach not be adopted.

Chimneys

More can be achieved in terms of area enhancement if the significant cost of re-building lost chimneys is diverted to other improvements of the housing stock. There may be a case for rebuilding chimneys that are still being used or

have a particular significance to a group of buildings. Examples would include: chimneys at the end of a terrace; the repair of a gap on a terrace where most chimneys remain, or where a new chimney would be a punctuation of the skyline and would enhance a focal point of a view. It should be noted that new chimneys should be constructed incorporating lead tray DPC's to prevent water ingress into the properties.

Walls

It is considered that the advice relating to the use of lime mortar and render and breathable finishes, outlined in the Design section, should be followed in the interest of enhancing the durability and comfort of a dwelling. There are, however, a great many cement render and pebbledash finishes, and it is likely that the money available for refurbishment will not make a significant visual impact on the area as a whole if each property is to be stripped back to the structure and re-rendered in lime plaster.

If there are no current structural problems evident as a result of the use of cement-rich renders, a greater area impact can be achieved by the use of paint to alleviate the drabness of the grey, beige and brown renders.

There is the opportunity to undertake a whole-street makeover. Metcalfe Street, for example is one of the oldest streets in Caerau (shown on the 1885 Ordnance Survey map). The houses were originally stables and have been altered to provide first floor living accommodation. The original continuity in the form of the terraces on both sides of the street is lost in a wild profusion of individual extensions, changing the scale and form of the houses. An improvement scheme that aimed to uniform the façade and the use of paint could reintroduce the street scene.

It is not suggested that stone and brick walls be painted (unless previously painted), because of the risk of trapping moisture in behind impermeable paint, and the consequent peeling of that paint. Such buildings can be given colour impact by painting the door and window joinery with richness and imagination.

Windows and doors

Many of the original windows have been replaced wth uPVC. Although these improve thermal performance and reduce future maintenance their appearance differs. Where windows have been renewed more recently, replacement is unlikely to be justified, because of the cost set against the marginal improvement in area character.

Paint systems are available for plastic-framed windows that could raise the character of the area.

Generally, it is accepted that windows will be replaced with double glazed uPVC units for thermal performance and long term maintenance, however where possible the style of the windows should try to match the style of the original window.

Where the plastic-framed windows do require replacing, and where this has a significant impact on a heritage scheme it may be worth considering replacement in painted timber.

In the interests of achieving area enhancement, brown windows, whether of stained hardwood or timber-effect plastic, are discouraged.

2. HERITAGE RESTORATION

Chimneys

Chimneys should be restored. Where the original pattern of chimney and chimney pot is apparent (e.g. from neighbouring properties in a terrace) that design should be used. If no original chimney survives, the new chimney should be of brick, corbelled out towards the top, to the full size of the original (as judged by the surviving flue), and with terracotta chimney pots. It should be noted that new chimneys should be constructed incorporating lead tray DPC's to prevent water ingress into the properties.

Roofs

A good quality imported (Canadian) natural slate, is the roofing material of choice. The ridge tiles should be plain clay, in black for the most part, unless the originals show as red. Interlocking concrete ridge tiles are inappropriate. Eaves should be of modest overhang or close boarded and open rather than boxed-in. Guttering and downpipes should be of black-painted cast iron or cast aluminium.

Walls

Walls should be repaired to their original appearance. Wherever possible the original material should be respected, particularly in respect of brick dressings and string courses in stone buildings. Many of these decorative features have been painted: that paint, for a heritage restoration, should be removed.

Where cement render or pebble-dash has been coated over original stone or brick it should be stripped off and the possibility of repairing the original surface in traditional materials assessed. If the face of the brick or stone is beyond restoration, a lime mortar render can be used, preferably with banded architraves around doors and windows (a local characteristic that gives some interest to the elevations). Painting of the render, in a breathable finish, should be in a choice of colour from the colour chart attached to this document.

Windows and doors

PVCu windows should be replaced with high-quality timber frames. Because the housing is mostly early 20th Century in date, both sash and casement windows are appropriate. If there is photographic evidence of the original windows in any property, that pattern should be followed in the replacements. As a general principle, where the original design is not known or cannot be inferred, windows should have a vertical emphasis and be horizontally symmetrical. Such windows will have a balance and character that complements the terraced house form. Where original openings have been altered in proportion, they should be restored to their original shape to match neighbouring buildings, in the interest of respecting the character of the terrace. If the window openings cannot be restored to the original shape, the frame

should be carefully designed to emphasise the principles of vertical emphasis and horizontal symmetry.

Originally, windows would typically have been painted in dull tones of brown, green or cream. It is suggested, even for a heritage restoration approach, that off-white is preferable, as it emphasises the glazing bar pattern against the darkness of the glazed areas, and gives the housing a much-needed 'sparkle'. A decorative option of some merit is to colour the frames adjacent to the glass in off-white, and to use a colour on the sub-frame of casement windows or the box frame of sash windows.

It appears that the top lights of casement windows often included leaded and stained glass. It is a feature whose restoration is worth considering, as it creates character outside and in.

The front door would be constructed in timber, most typically four panelled. Where there is a fanlight no glazing in the door is necessary, but for extra light the two upper panels could be glazed. As much of the housing is of early 20th century date, Edwardian and 1920's door patterns can also be appropriate. These include styles with deep lower panels (plain or vertically planked) and small panes or oval lights in the upper panels.

There is evidence of stained glass having been used in fanlights. Used with discretion, stained glass can provide interest to a heritage restoration.

The appropriate finish for joinery in a heritage restoration is always stained finishes. The front door should be painted a strong colour, with darker tones being preferable. White is not a traditional finish, and PVCu doors are extremely detrimental. Imitation moulded wood-grain effects on PVCu doors are utterly unsympathetic to a heritage restoration, because the timber doors they purport to mimic were filled, sanded, painted, smoothed and polished to conceal any timber texture.

Front boundary walls and railings

Where there is or has been an enclosed forecourt, it is recommended that it be restored. The key to materials and colour should be taken from any surviving boundary wall or railing in the same terrace. If there is no surviving original wall, but it is clear that forecourts were enclosed, a brick wall will usually be appropriate. It is suggested that the brick be chosen with reference to any bricks on the related house or terrace. Consideration can also be given to introducing capping, string courses or gate piers in complementary brick.

Where railings are fitted, these should be galvanised at first, but in the longer term a painted finish is appropriate. (It is prudent to leave galvanised steel railings for a year to weather before painting, to allow the paint to adhere better.) There is no strong reason why the railings in a terrace should all be of a single colour, and painting can be left to the householder's choice, although it is recommended that there be a limited palette of suggested colours (dark green, dark blue, brown, and black, for example).

3. COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL BUILDINGS

Community buildings

For the most part, houses are the background buildings in the environment, whereas the larger churches, chapels, clubs and pubs are the landmarks, both because of their size and because of their function as centres of the community. It therefore follows that enhancement of the larger buildings will have a greater effect on the character of the community.

Some buildings, often churches and chapels, have been identified as being of some heritage interest. The best approach to these buildings will be to restore the original details as far as possible consistent with ensuring a viable future use. The heritage buildings embody the memory of the community and give a sense of continuity. Proposals for demolition or major alteration should be treated with the greatest circumspection.

There are no statutorily listed buildings in Caerau, but there are four listed buildings in Nantyffyllon. Those buildings are:

- Salem Welsh Baptist Chapel, Picton Street (grade 2*)
- Siloh Independent Chapel, High Street (grade 2)
- Capel Saron, High Street (grade 2)
- Nantyffyllon Workmen's Institute, Bangor Street (grade 2)

The following buildings have been identified on the draft list of buildings of local architectural or historic interest. Inclusion on the draft list confers no particular statutory protection for the buildings, but the identified architectural or historic interest is a material consideration in the determination of applications for planning permission. The draft list is very much work in progress, and it is expected to be extensively revised prior to being reported to Members for the purposes of public consultation, subsequent further amendment, and final adoption as supplementary planning guidance. For this reason the following should be taken only as a tentative identification of local architectural or historic interest.

- Trinity Church, Bangor Terrace, Nantyffyllon
- Dyffryn chapel, Bedw Street, Caerau
- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, Picton Street, Nantyffyllon
- Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses' adjacent Chapel Picton Street, Nantyffyllon
- Seion Chapel, Caerau Road, Caerau
- Noddfa Chapel, Caerau Road, Caerau
- No. 13 Carmen Street, Caerau (Historical association – Home of 1186 Private Sam Pitt, defender of Rorke's Drift, 1879, Anglo – Zulu war)
- Old Nantyffyllon Library, Coronation Terrace
- Dyffryn Llynffi, Dyffryn Road, Caerau
- Mission Hall, Dyffryn Road, Caerau
- Trefwyddion (Good Shepherd Church), Dyffryn Road, Caerau

- Calfaria Pentecostal Church, Hermon Road, Nantyffyllon
- Bethany Baptist Church, Hermon Road, Nantyffyllon
- St. Peter's Church, Picton Street, Nantyffyllon
- St. Cynfelyn's Church, Treharne road, Caerau
- Iron Industry Cottages, Union Street, Nantyfyllon
- Bethel Chapel, Wesley Street, Caerau
- Hermon Chapel, Hermon Road

Social buildings

There are other buildings, significant through size or social function (the clubs and public houses) that are of little or no intrinsic heritage interest, but which nevertheless play a role in the character of the area. At the present, that role is largely negative: big, drab, dilapidated, and architecturally undistinguished structures that are more a blight than an asset. The buildings need maintenance, but in itself that would do little to enhance their appearance. Restoration of original features is of no help where the original appearance was utilitarian or commonplace. The enhancement of these problem buildings, and through that the enhancement of the identity of the area, requires innovation and imagination.

Demolition and redevelopment is always an option, but it is not one that is likely at this time to result in the enhancement of the area. The current poor image of Caerau and Nantyffyllon deters investment, such that the best that can usually be hoped for is a downmarket housing development.

What is needed is a low-cost but eye-catching restoration and the solution may be – paint. The disadvantage of paint is that the effect may only be short term (5-10 years), if maintenance cannot be guaranteed. The potential impact, however, of colour, pattern, and design on the feel of the area should bring about the image shift that is a key to drawing investment into the area. This is not just a matter of painting plain colours in a conventional way – the aim should be to use art and design to create a must-see environment.

This is a suggestion that needs to gain community support, both regarding the principle and in terms of the images to be applied to the community buildings. While it would be possible to achieve some enhancement through the use of strong single colours, a greater impact might be achieved through the encouragement of more striking art works, involving artists and the local community working together. Done with confidence and imagination the community buildings could change from being eyesores to reasons to visit.

Further, it is essential that future long term maintenance is considered for every scheme. Improvements to enhance the appearance of a building must either have low maintenance implications or enable the use of the building to sustainably maintain the building in the future.

4. SHOP FRONTS

Shops act as focal points for local people and visitors, and well-designed and attractive shop buildings will improve the impact of the area.

It would be possible, with the assistance of property owners, to restore lost character and to bring back some interest to the street scene. An echo of former retail use could be created with the addition of traditional shop surround details to the front elevations.

The economic viability of the shop premises must be kept at the forefront of any renewal scheme. However, the following principles encourage shop fronts that relate to the character of the shop building and the street scene.

Principle 01 - Original period shop fronts or shop front features of good quality should be retained and restored. Before a new shop front is designed the existing shop front, if there is one, should be carefully considered. Repair may be cheaper than building a new shop front. A further advantage is that no planning consent is needed for a repair. Even if the shop window and door are replaced, a scheme that retains a good shop surround will be preferable to one that replaces it.

Principle 02 - New shop fronts should be in scale with the shop building and with any adjoining shop fronts of good quality. A single shop front extending over two or more shop buildings creates a conflict of scale. That conflict damages the appearance of the street. An over-long shop front also disrupts the rhythm of shop units. With separate shop fronts - even for the same business - a walk down the street is filled with interest. A long, undivided shopping frontage is, by comparison, dull and uninviting.

Principle 03 - New shop fronts should give visual support to the upper floors of the shop building. The shop front is part of a whole building frontage. In most cases the structure of the building includes a rectangular opening for the shop window, created by a steel girder supported at its ends, and sometimes by columns along its length. It is possible to obscure the structural logic of the building by unframed, or lightly framed glass, and a rectangular plastic fascia that is clearly tacked-on to the building.

Principle 04 - A new shop front should relate to the style of the shop building. If the shop front is designed to relate to the character and appearance of the shop building it will be given enhanced presence. The character of the whole building will be strengthened and it will play a bigger part in creating the unique identity of the shopping area. Relationship can be established by the re-use of details from the upper floors in close stylistic match for the shop front. At the very least, an echo of the proportions of the upper floor can link the two elements.

Principle 05 - A shop front should have three-dimensional interest. Too many modern shop fronts are dull and unrewarding because they are flat, and have little differentiation from the plane of the wall. As they are mostly seen obliquely

at close distances by passers-by the lack of projection and recession of the parts of the shop front is a missed opportunity for enrichment. A three-dimensional shop front could have, for example, an entry recess, a canted fascia, and projecting pilasters and decorative consoles. The result is shadow detail, liveliness, and interest.

Principle 06 - Shop fronts and their associated advertisements should be finished in materials sympathetic in colour and texture to those of the shop building and of the street as a whole. The best materials for new or replacement shop fronts are the traditional materials that symbolise continuity, permanence, and quality - wood, brick, stone, plaster, ceramic tiles and paint.

Principle 07 - The colouring of a shop front should enhance the unity of its elements. The shop front normally consists of the shop window, with its glazing bars and door, and the shop surround, comprising the pilasters, entablature, and stall riser. If only one colour for all the elements is used, the shop front will be united. If two colours are used, the pilasters and entablature should have the same colour. If the pilasters are a different colour from the fascias they will appear detached, and lose the visual expression of support.

If the shop front has two colours, it is recommended that a darker colour be used for the pilasters and entablature to give them added “weight”, and a lighter for the glazing bars, which are seen against the darkness of the window glass. If the colours are also used on the joinery of the upper floors a valuable additional point of harmony can be added. The stall-riser may reflect either the shop surround or the glazing bars, or it may be in a harmonising colour, or a material matching the main walling of the shop building.

If the shop front is ornately designed there is scope for drawing attention to the decorative enrichments through the use of multiple colours and/or gilding.

Principle 08 - New shop fronts must comply with current Building Regulations and they must take account of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. To allow easy access the threshold should ideally be flush with the pavement. If there must be a ramp its slope should be preferably about 1 in 20, but certainly no steeper than 1 in 12. Floor surfaces should be even, firm, and non-slip. Steps should be avoided.

Principle 09 - The design of a shop front should include clear and integrated provision for advertising. A place for advertising should therefore be identified in the initial shop front design. Consideration should be given to allowing signs to be changed without damaging the structure of the shop front.

Principle 10 - Security devices should be integrated with the design of the shop front. If a solid roller shutter is used for security purposes it is best painted to match the shop window surround. It is better to use a grille rather than a solid shutter so that the window display can still be seen. Alternatively, laminated glass, could be used.

Overall security is one of the most important factors to be considered if the scheme is to ensure support from the shopkeeper.

Principle 11 – If canopies or awnings are used, they should have a traditional character, and should only be used on ground floor shop windows where there is a genuine need for shading. While a canopy can offer a little shelter and a touch of colour it can also detract from the appearance of a building by its awkward shape, unsuitable materials and the concealment of architectural features.

Principle 12 - Unusual and imaginative shop front designs appropriate to the shop building and to the surrounding area will be encouraged. . Novel and unusual design, appropriately used, can enrich the appearance of the area, making it more memorable and attractive. Diversity, colour, and decoration are part of the tradition of shop front design.