



Aberystwyth Shopfront & Commercial Facade Design Guide

Supplementary Planning Guidance

May 2013



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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document sets out Ceredigion County Council's guidance on the design and appearance of shopfronts and commercial facades within Aberystwyth town centre and Conservation Area boundaries as set out within the Ceredigion Local Development Plan (LDP). It is intended that this SPG will give advice to those seeking planning permission or listed building consent for alterations, improvements and restoration of their commercial properties. Furthermore, guidance is intended to help building owners ensure that improvements will have a positive impact on the surrounding townscape. The guidance clarifies the standard of design that the Council will expect from applicants.

1.2 Background

In July 2010, Powell Dobson Urbanists, created Town Improvement Grant (TIG) Design Guidelines for Welsh Government. The Town Improvement Grant scheme is a Welsh Government funded initiative which allows building owners/leaseholders to apply for grants (50%-70% of the cost) to improve the exterior of their commercial premises. The Design Guidelines set out some basic principles and recommendations for the improvement of buildings in Aberystwyth Town Centre. The guidelines are intended for use by prospective applicants in order to give them an understanding of what improvements are acceptable.

Some properties have already benefitted from TIG funding and are beginning to make a noticeable difference on the quality of the town centre. This SPG builds on the guidelines as set out in the TIG, continuing as planning guidance for Ceredigion County Council. Therefore this document covers all commercial premises in Aberystwyth Town Centre, not just those applying/eligible for TIG funding.

This SPG advocates the same aims as the TIG guidance - to improve the built environment of the town centre. It is recognised that this can have a variety of benefits:

- Stimulating economic activity.
- Protecting the character of the town.
- Improving the attractiveness of the town.

(A plan illustrating the TIG eligible area is available on page 11.)



17-19 Pier Street before TIG funded building improvements.



17-19 Pier Street after. Improvements are of high quality and are appropriate to the building and its surroundings

Importance of Commercial Buildings in Aberystwyth

1.3

Aberystwyth Town Centre lies within a Conservation Area which is ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest’. This means that when a Conservation Area is designated, the Council has recognised that the area has a special character and identity which is worth protecting. The council is required by legislation to preserve or enhance the character of each Conservation Area, and therefore all new proposals which affect that special character have to be considered carefully.

The design and appearance of commercial facades and shopfronts has a major role to play in maintaining and enhancing a quality built environment and indeed, the Conservation Area. It is important that changes to shopfronts and building facades complement the street scene, historic fabric and architectural quality of Aberystwyth Town Centre. This is particularly important given the history of Aberystwyth as a trading town and the wealth of exceptionally good nineteenth and early twentieth century shopfronts that still exist. Adhering to some general principles of design will ensure that the historic character of the town is preserved and further enhanced.

Threats

1.4



Evidence of a shopfront that has been unsympathetically altered in the past and poorly maintained

Over time building elevations can become degraded as a result of inappropriate additions, poor quality and/or infrequent maintenance and the loss of original features. Specific issues faced by historic commercial buildings in Aberystwyth include:

- Inappropriate/removed/blocked windows
- Poor quality/inappropriate signage
- Insensitive removal of historic features
- Out of proportion shop fronts
- The use of inappropriate colour
- The choice of materials such as aluminium over timber in period facades
- Lack of maintenance and basic repair



Poor quality and out of scale signage has a negative effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area

The threats mentioned above are gradually eroding the overall quality of Aberystwyth Town Centre. The council will strongly resist any shopfront proposals which will contribute to the further erosion of the quality of the town.

2 Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Role of Supplementary Planning Guidance

Welsh Government policy, as set out in Planning Policy Wales (2011), acknowledges that Supplementary Planning Guidance has a valuable role in supporting the development plan as far as setting out the 'design expectations of local planning authorities' are concerned. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) also suggests that such guidance helps local planning authorities 'encourage good quality design of buildings and spaces, with an overall aim of eliminating 'poor quality development'(4.10.15). Supplementary Planning Guidance should "support the management of town centres" noting that "such management, involving enhancement and promotion, can be an important factor in achieving vitality, attractiveness and viability" (10.2.8) in town centres.

This SPG fulfils these roles as set out by Welsh Government, by outlining what is expected in order to encourage good design with an overall aim of enhancing the town centre.

2.2 National Planning Guidance

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, February 2011)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the Welsh Government's planning policy framework for development management in Wales. The PPW sets out key objectives which are to be taken into account in the preparation of development plans and in the control of development. Section 6 'Conserving the Historic Environment' and Section 10 'Planning for Retailing and Town Centres' of PPW set out objectives which are significant.

Section 6.1 states that planning proposals should, where appropriate:

- *"Preserve or enhance the historic environment, recognising its contribution to economic vitality and culture, civic pride and the quality of life, and its importance as a resource for future generations;*
- *Ensure that the character of historic buildings is safeguarded from alterations, extensions or demolition that would compromise a building's special architectural and historic interest; and to,*
- *Ensure that conservation areas are protected or enhanced"*

Furthermore, Section 6.5 states that:

- *"Should any proposed development conflict with the objective of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, or its setting, there will be a strong presumption against the grant of planning permission."*
- *"When considering planning applications for advertisements in conservation areas, local planning authorities should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area."*
- *Where a development proposal affects a listed building or its setting, the primary material consideration is the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses."*

Section 10 highlights the requirement of the planning system in terms of maintaining and enhancing the "vitality, attractiveness and viability of town, district, local and village centres" (10.1).

TAN 12 Design (June 2009)

Planning Policy Wales is supported by a series of Technical Advice Notes (TANs) of which TAN 12 is relevant. It aims to equip all those that are involved in the design of the built environment with core design principles that any proposal must follow to help create a sustainable environment and exhibit a high level of design quality.

The following principles are considered to be relevant:

- “Design which is inappropriate in its context, or which fails to grasp opportunities to enhance the character, quality and function of an area, should not be accepted, as these have detrimental effects on existing communities (2.6)
- Design for the built environment plays a key role in economic growth and in raising the quality of places we live and work. (4.1)
- Understanding the site and its immediate and wider context is the basis for a meaningful and sustainable design response. (4.3)
- In many cases an appraisal of the local context will highlight distinctive patterns of development...where the intention will be to sustain character. Appraisal is equally important in areas where patterns of development have failed to respond to context in the past. (4.5)
- Appraising “character” involves attention to...prevalent materials in buildings or floorscape, architecture and historic quality...boundary treatments...and locally distinctive features’ (4.8)
- In the alteration of listed buildings and in the wider historic environment efforts should be made to use local materials or materials from other sources which have equivalent appearance, colour and weathering characteristics. It may be appropriate to abandon conventional design solutions in favour of a more imaginative and contemporary approach (5.6.4)”.

Welsh Office Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas (1996)

This circular sets advice on legislation and procedures relating to historic buildings and conservation areas. Part 2 (Conservation Areas) sets out policy for Conservation Areas in Wales, highlighting the reasons and key features taken into account during Conservation Area designation:

“Quality of place should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas. This depends on more than individual buildings. It is recognised that the special character of a place may derive from many factors, including: the grouping of buildings, their scale and relationship with outdoor spaces ...the mix and relative importance of focus and background buildings ...materials used in buildings ...architectural detailing (of windows, doors, eaves, gates, kerbs,...); patterns of use; colours.” (para 20)

The document highlights planning control in Conservation Areas concerning control of demolition, advertisement control, trees and general planning control. As a commercial town centre the following is particularly relevant to Aberystwyth:

“Generally there will need to be an emphasis on controlled and positive management of change, to allow the area to remain alive and prosperous, and ensure that any new development accords with the area’s special architectural and historic qualities. Many conservation areas

include gap sites, or buildings that make no positive contribution to, or indeed detract from, the character or appearance of the area; and their replacement should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, but that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own.” (para 30)

Annex D of the circular lists general principles in relation to the alteration of listed buildings. Any proposals for listed building alteration should pay due regard to the advice given in the Appendix of Annex D on all elements of external building features including detailed information regarding shop fronts. It is likely that this advice is also relevant to buildings which aren't listed but still have historic significance in the context of the wider Conservation Area and the appearance of the town as a whole.

2.3 Local Planning Guidance

Ceredigion County Council Local Development Plan (2007-2022)

The Local Development Plan, adopted in May 2013, identifies opportunities for continuing investment and regeneration including the protection of conservation interests along with measures to sustain a natural environment. It is reiterated that sustaining and enhancing Ceredigion's high quality built environment is of great importance. The following policies are relevant to this Supplementary Planning Guidance:

DM06 High Quality Design & Placemaking

Policy DM06 sets out Ceredigion County Council's principles for good design which 'positively contributes to the context of its location'. The key design principles considered to be relevant are:

- *“Promote innovative design whilst having regard to local distinctiveness and cultural heritage in terms of form, design and material;*
- *Provide a safe environment by ensuring that the design of buildings and associated routes and open spaces consider safety principles;*
- *Encourage the re-use of materials wherever possible and ensure that new materials where used are sympathetic to the character of the locality;*
- *Where practicable, include infrastructure for modern telecommunications and information; and,*
- *Have regard to Settlement Group Statements, Supplementary Planning Guidance, Conservation Area Appraisals and any other relevant supporting documents.”*

This policy recognises that design considerations are extremely important when it comes to the appearance of the built environment.

Policy DM07 Conservation Areas

Policy DM07 aims to protect and enhance the existing built form within Conservation Areas. The policy suggests that there is a need to take into account the Conservation Area Appraisal Report for Aberystwyth. *“These Reports should be referred to as they will provide information on the topography, landscape setting, history, buildings and settlement forms of the Area. The Reports may also highlight negative features that detract from the special qualities of the Area and recommend ways forward to protect and further enhance the area. Copies of Appraisals are available on the Council’s website.”*

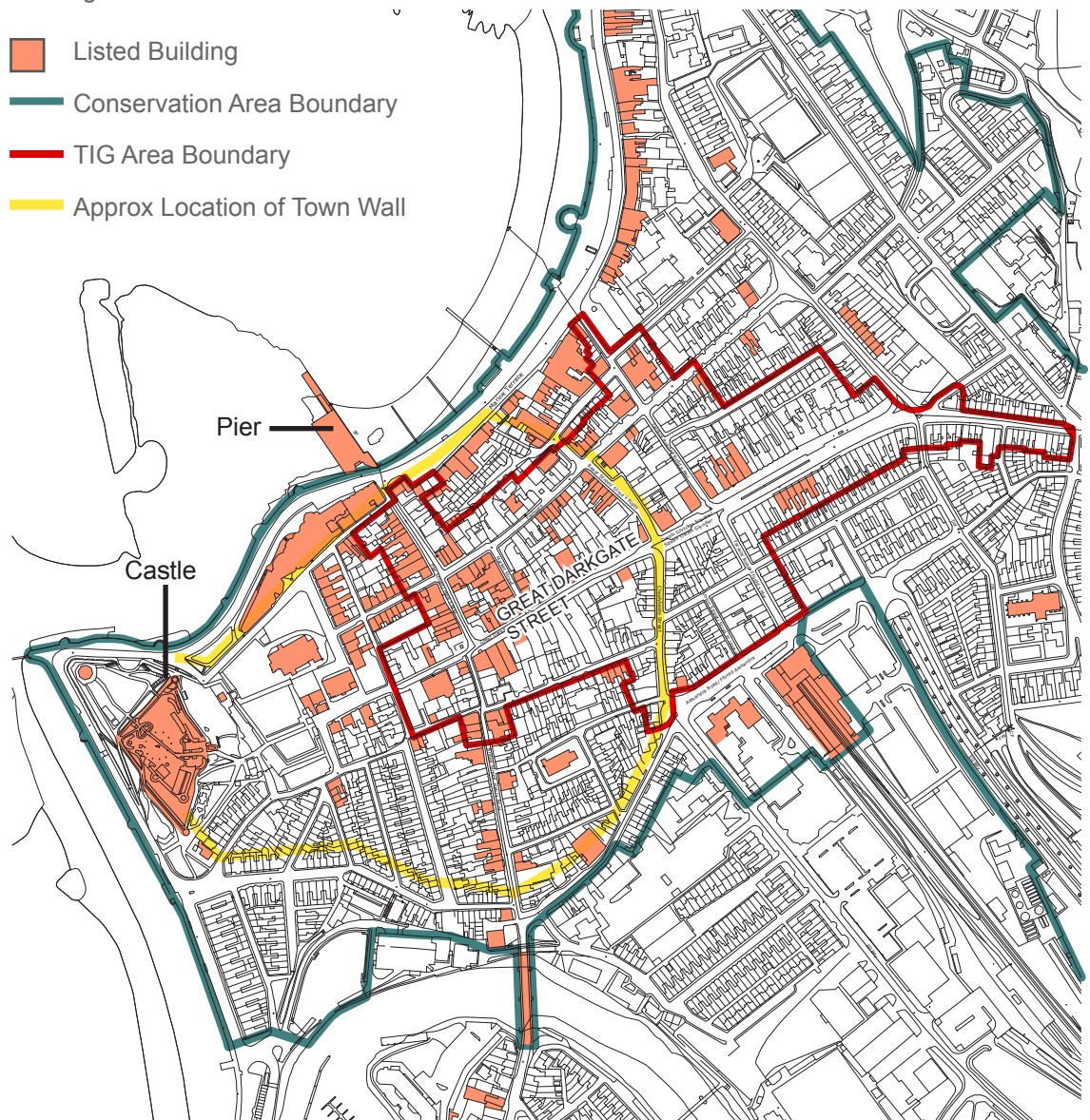
Policy DM08 Bilingual Signs and Place Names

This policy is relevant when it comes to permissions regarding signage on shopfronts. It is outlined that permission will be granted for a sign providing it does not have an unacceptable impact on, and where possible positively enhances the visual and/or linguistic character of the area. The use of bilingual signs and advertisements is supported given that it promotes a distinct sense of place.

Aberystwyth is an important historic town with a strong and distinctive character. It was founded in the late thirteenth century, and the medieval street pattern survives to this day. The town was originally walled, and the line of the walls can still be traced in Chalybeate Street, Baker Street, Mill Street and King Street. Most of the buildings within the historic core reflect its later history as a social and commercial centre and a resort. Apart from the castle, no medieval buildings are known to survive, and most of the town centre buildings reflect the town's history as a sea-side resort and commercial centre in the nineteenth century.

All of the town centre is within a Conservation Area and contains many listed buildings. All of the buildings within the Conservation Area contribute to the historic character of the town and have different qualities highlighting the various 'chapters' in the historic growth of the town.

The plan below illustrates the town centre within the Conservation Area and also highlights those buildings which are listed.



Plan of the town centre highlighting the Listed Buildings and the Conservation Area boundary

Understanding the context and character of Aberystwyth is important in order to design a building facade that is appropriate to the building it is a part of, and its surroundings. In Aberystwyth town centre there are two strong character areas.

The main commercial centre of Aberystwyth historically centred around Great Darkgate Street, Bridge Street and Pier Street, But after the arrival of the railway in the 1860s, Terrace Road was developed as a direct route into the town from the station, and became an important focus for new commercial activity. (See *'Building Character Plan' Page 11*)

Great Darkgate Street, Bridge Street and Pier Street are medieval in origin, and buildings on these streets often occupy footprints that were first set out in the thirteenth century. Outside the line of the walls, Owain Glyndwr Square and Terrace Road were new in the nineteenth century, and many properties here were purpose-built for commerce and occupy a wider footprint than within the medieval core of the town. As a result the shopfronts in this area tend to be more indicative of a typical Victorian shopfront with larger windows and doorways which are quite often central to the shopfront. Generally, these buildings have more ornate and decorative detailing and are of a larger scale than earlier buildings in the area.

As the town became more prosperous, and the demand for goods grew, the number of commercial enterprises increased and in order to be located close to the existing commercial core, ground floor residential properties were converted into shopfronts. (See *'Building Character Plan' Page 11*)

These 'side' streets in Aberystwyth, such as Bridge Street and Eastgate, tend to have a more domestic scale with narrower building plots. These are typically within the medieval parts of town and commonly the streets are much narrower and intimate. Commercial units in these streets tend to be interspersed with residential units. Where commercial units do exist they are of a more domestic scale with simple detailing. As a result, the character here is different to the commercial centre of town and building owners will be expected to acknowledge this when making alterations.






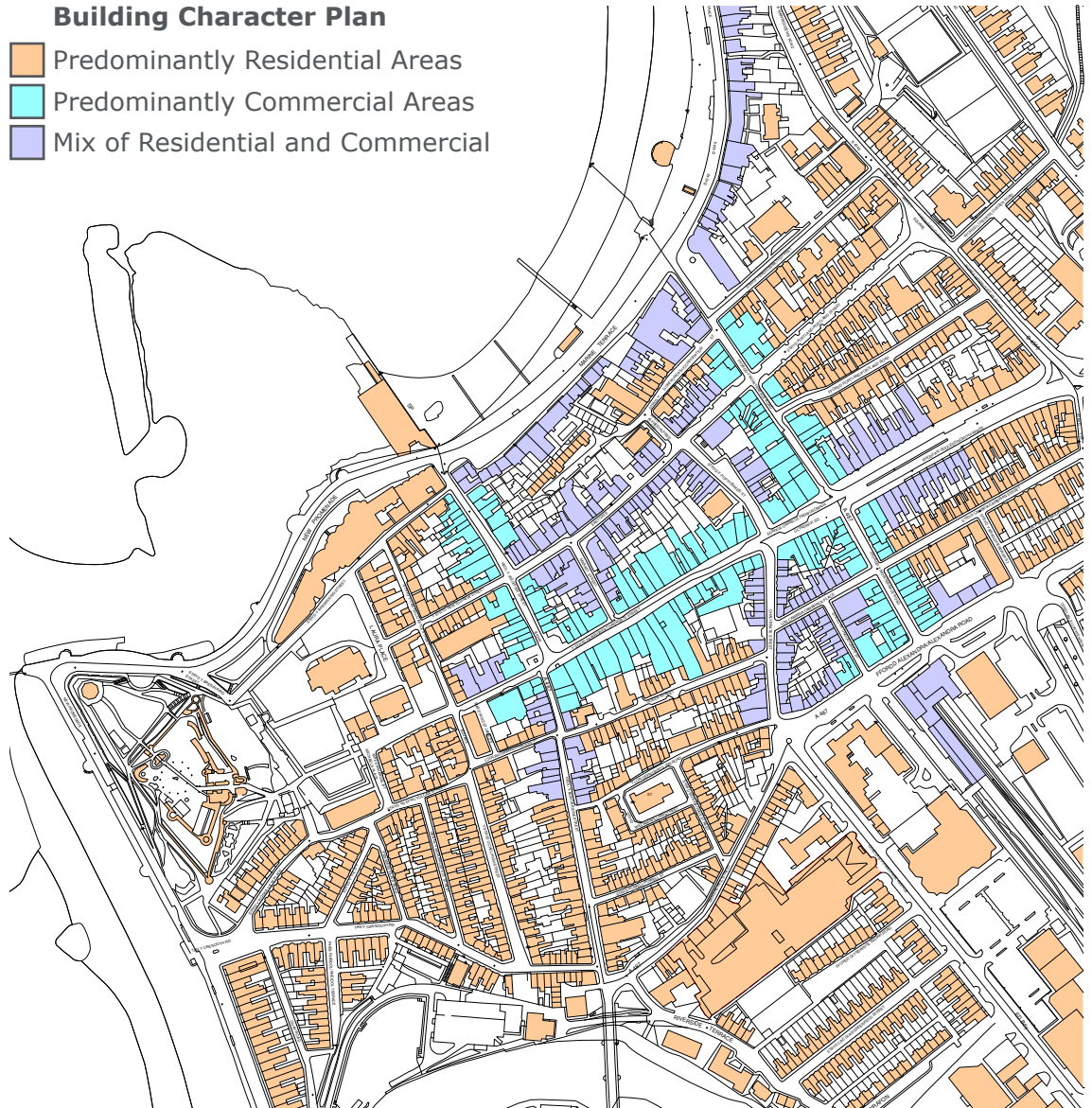
An example of a traditional shopfront in the heart of one of the original commercial areas on Pier Street.



An example of a residential property which has been altered to accommodate a commercial use. The changes still respect and reflect the buildings residential past.

Building Character Plan

-  Predominantly Residential Areas
-  Predominantly Commercial Areas
-  Mix of Residential and Commercial



Plan of the town centre highlighting how the commercial core of the town centre has spread into more domestically scaled peripheral buildings

Another key characteristic of Aberystwyth is the prominence and importance of the corner buildings. A large majority of these are in excellent condition and are important key buildings in the town. Quite a few of these buildings are public houses and have more decorative and ornamental features. Therefore, any proposed changes to corner buildings should be extremely well considered to complement the existing corner building stock that exists throughout the town.

Understanding this difference in character is of great importance when designing a commercial facade. A full Victorian shopfront may not be appropriate in some of the medieval side streets for example, because of the scale of the buildings. Similarly, shopfront changes proposed in the commercial heart of the town such as on Great Darkgate Street should reflect the scale as much as the character of their surroundings.

A building characteristic study 'Aberystwyth: Understanding Urban Character' by Cadw (the Welsh Government's historic environment service) includes more information about the character and history of Aberystwyth and may help support an application.



An example of a good quality and prominent corner building which retains most of its original shopfront elements.



A commercial property which retains the scale and simplicity of its residential origins



Eastgate: A simple and restrained shopfront with a domestic scale before and after restoration.

4 Planning Permission Requirements

4.1 Likely Permissions

Commercial premises in the town centre tend to have street-level frontage and signage. The following would constitute as commercial premises in the town:

- Retail premises
- Estate agents/mortgage brokers/financial advisors
- Betting/amusements shops
- Banks/building societies
- Restaurants/bars/take aways

Alterations to these are likely to trigger the requirement for one or more of the following types of planning consent:

Planning Permission: Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 this is required for any alterations that change the material appearance of the building. This includes:

- A new shopfront
- Fascia changes
- Canopies
- Alterations/extensions/replacement works

Listed Building Consent: A large number of the buildings in Aberystwyth Town Centre are listed and the entire retail centre falls within the Aberystwyth Conservation Area. Consent is required for any alterations to a listed building. This can include repainting it, installing blinds or shutters or adding extra components such as alarms and air conditioning units. Listed building consent is also required for internal alterations which are likely to affect the character of the building.

Advertisement Consent: Required for the display of advertisements such as illuminated signs or fascias, projecting signage and large signage at ground floor level.

Building Regulations: Approval is required for new shopfronts or alterations proposing a change to means of escape, access, disabled access and will be required to meet latest safety and energy efficiency standards.

If you wish to carry out any works of this kind, and have any questions that may not be answered by this SPG, contact the council for a discussion before you start any work. This will help you establish whether you do need planning permission(s), listed building consent, building regulations or advertisement consent. The council can also give further advice on what may be acceptable before you undertake any design works or sign any contracts.

Bat derogation licence: A bat derogation licence is required for any works that would otherwise result in act prohibited by wildlife legislation. Bats are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) which makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

This may occur when carrying out works to soffits, roofs etc. For full details of their protection and how to avoid breaching this legislation, including determining whether there is a bat roosts (occupied or not) please see “Briefing Note for Ecological and Geological Surveys and Assessments” or contact the Council.

5 Development Control

This section will help you compile the correct information that will enable your enquiry or planning application to be processed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

5.1 Checklist

Existing Streetscape:

Has the relationship of the proposed design taken into account the rest of the building as well as those adjoining it? Has the design considered the overall character of the immediate environment?

Building Elevations:

Is the scale and design of any shopfront in proportion to the facade of the building? Do the upper floors and shopfront complement one another to create one harmonious building frontage?

Shopfront Design:

Are there any historic shopfront elements that are capable of being retained and remediated? Are there any historical photos which give clues about the original design of the shopfront? Are the design materials and features employed in the scheme high quality? Do they respond to the historical context of the shopfront?

Signage:

Is the graphic design style, advertisement and illumination appropriate to the rest of the shopfront, building and streetscape? Does it contain Welsh language?

Canopies and Blinds:

Have they been considered within the overall design of the shopfront and the building as a whole? Are they appropriate to the use of the premises?

Security:

Do security devices obstruct any architectural features on the building or have a negative visual impact? Have internal sliding security grilles been considered?

Access:

Does the design allow access to all, including people with disabilities, in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010?



The shopfront design and rest of the building facade complement one another and create a harmonious frontage



An example of a graphic style appropriate to the shopfront, especially since it is written in Welsh

Materials Required for a Planning Application

5.2

- Planning Application Form
- The correct fee
- Design & Access Statement:

A statement to describe in simple terms how design and access issues relevant to the application, have been considered and addressed.

- Plans and Drawings:

1. Site Location Plan at a scale of 1:1250. This should show at least two named roads in the area and two numbered/named surrounding buildings. The application building should be edged clearly with a red line.
2. Block Plan at a scale of 1:200. This should show the application building in relation to boundaries with adjoining buildings, roads, footpaths and adjoining land. The plan should include some written dimensions.
3. Existing and Proposed Elevations at a scale of 1:50. Elevation(s) should clearly show the building as exists. Proposed elevations should include proposed materials and styles, colours, fittings and the proposed material and finish of windows and doors. The elevations should show the applicant buildings relationship with adjoining properties.
4. Existing and Proposed floor plans at a scale of 1:50. Where relevant, fully detailed existing and proposed plans will be required. These must show details of any changes to access.
5. Detailed plans and cross sectional elevations at scale of 1:20. It is anticipated that detailed drawings will be required due to the intricate nature of the proposals; this is particularly true where the application building is listed. Details plans and cross sections should show new doors, windows and shop front details such as mouldings, fittings, joinery details, lettering and signage.

- **A Heritage Statement.** This is required with all applications for listed buildings. A written statement should include a schedule of works, an analysis of the significance of the architecture, history and character of the building, and a justification for the proposed works. The justification should include the impact of the proposed works on the special character of the building, adjacent buildings and wider setting.
- **Bat Survey and Assessment:** If there is no likelihood of bats roosting, then all that is required is a short statement explaining why the building is not suitable or how the works will not affect bats within the Ecology section of the Design and Access statement. Otherwise, a Bat Survey and Assessment should be provided and any relevant mitigation included on the plans and drawings, along with a summary within the Design and Access statement to draw it all together.

For more information on the above planning application requirements please see the document "National Requirement for Planning Applications at Ceredigion County Council", available to view at <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk>. Alternatively you can contact a planning officer at the County Council to discuss your likely requirements.

6 Design Principles

The Victorian and Edwardian eras represent a time in Aberystwyth when retail trade had gained considerable importance in the town's economy resulting in permanent shops and commercial premises which are representative of the era. The established principles of successful commercial facade design, particularly shopfronts, have their foundations in Victorian and Edwardian architecture. There are a number of good examples of traditional commercial architecture across the town centre from throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Traditional design principles of proportion and balance can be applied successfully to most type of building. This is particularly important given the historical significance of this era in Aberystwyth's development.

6.1 Basic Principles

Some basic design principles have been set out below. Any future amendments to commercial premises in the town centre should seek to follow these principles.

- Original shopfronts and other architectural features should be retained and refurbished. Any original features that have been concealed by later additions should be restored.
- Buildings should be refurbished via an 'evidence based' approach where possible. This can be obtained by studying historic photographs and carefully understanding the history and era of the building.
- Where an original shopfront cannot be repaired or reinstated, new shopfronts should harmonise with the age and character of the building as a whole.
- Where a new shopfront is needed it should maintain proportion with the rest of the building and take due regard to adjoining properties. The design should be sensitive to the specific context and character of the area.
- Detailing and design in post-war building can apply similar characteristics and proportion principles as surrounding Victorian and Edwardian ones, without necessarily using the same decorative details and materials.
- The building as a whole should contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area.
- Where there is a shopfront, it should form the 'base' of the building above.
- Signage and security precautions should not exceed what is reasonably necessary to advertise the business and give protection against burglary and vandalism.
- Illumination of a shopfront should be via external illumination as opposed to internally illuminated box signs.
- Doorways and entrances should be obvious and accessible to people with disabilities
- The name of the business should be presented in a way which is in proportion to the building facade by corresponding with the dimensions of the fascia. The sign should also be bilingual.
- High quality improvements should be applied to the whole facade. This includes removing redundant fixtures and fittings such as signs, cables etc. and cleaning or painting any brickwork or stonework. Gutters and down pipes should also be designed and maintained to a high standard.
- The rhythm of the upper floors should be maintained or reinstated if necessary, especially where adjacent premises are to be operated as a single concern. In this case, each unit should be individually expressed by retaining or reintroducing vertical elements (where they existed) such as pilasters between each shopfront and masonry bands between upper floors.

Elements of a Typical Shopfront

6.2

The shopfront is a prominent part of most commercial frontages. The design and function of the shopfront is integral to the appearance of the building as a whole. The illustration below outlines the primary elements which make up a shopfront. These will be referred to throughout this document.



Appropriate detailing on the shopfront is essential for the achievement of good design that responds to Aberystwyth's character and heritage. When these shopfront details are ignored and poorly implemented, the result is often an unattractive frontage that appears out of place and more importantly, out of character.

Special attention will need to be paid to the elements shown above in order to retain and enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area.



Throughout the document a red cross indicates the kind of development that is unlikely to achieve planning consent. Green ticks suggest examples that are of a high design standard deemed acceptable and therefore encouraged.

6.3 Appropriate Proportions

It is important that the shopfront proportions are consistent with the building they compose a part of as well as the surrounding buildings. Good shopfront design should generally conform to the following basic proportions:

- The stallrisers should not be more than 25% of the total shopfront height.
- The fascias should not be more than 20% of the total shopfront height.
- Consoles/corbels should not significantly exceed the proportion of the fascia.
- The transom should be no lower than half the height of the shopfront.
- The fascia should not impose upon the sills of the windows above. Where the shopfront and the sills do meet they should be clearly separated by the use of a cornice.

The upper floors should already be defined by the presence of a fascia or cornice of an existing ground floor shopfront. Where this is not the case, when converting residential to commercial premises for example, reference should be made to the height of the existing ground floor windows and doors and those on the adjacent building(s). These proportions should be used as a guide and applied in the context of the age, location, scale, detailing and the overall character of the building.

6.4 Contemporary Buildings

The design of commercial frontage on post-war buildings should follow the same basic principles as outlined in 7.1 and 7.3. It is likely that these proportions and principles are generally still applicable, however, there is an increased need to consider the context and scale of the overall building. Applying Victorian or Edwardian proportions to a more contemporary building may not necessarily be successful given the variation in the size of the fascia, stallriser and windows in particular.

Detailing should also be carefully considered. It is unlikely that ornate and traditional decorative details and elements will be successful in the context of a more modern building. Applicants are encouraged to consider the use of high quality contemporary detailing which is appropriate to the character of the town. This may be in the form of lighting, ironmongery, signage, hanging signs, etc.

There is still scope for designs to exhibit individual flair on contemporary buildings. Innovative proposals will be considered provided that they are properly considered, justified, high quality and well-detailed.



An example of a good quality contemporary shopfront which takes into consideration basic principles of Victorian/Edwardian proportions



The shopfront to the right is an 'off the shelf' design and its Victorian proportions pay no regard to the proportions of the building or adjacent shopfronts

This section of the SPG analyses some sample areas of the town centre and suggests some indicative recommendations for improvement in these areas. This will help you to understand how to analyse your building so that you can identify issues, understand how they may be rectified and more importantly, what is deemed as an appropriate alteration and why. The recommendations are indicative however, and specific proposals should take into account historic precedent, the character of the building and its immediate context.




Sample Blocks

7.1


Sample building elevations in Aberystwyth town centre have been selected as example areas that have informed a set of design guidelines. These areas were selected on the basis of their strategic importance in the town centre, and because they include a range of building types and a range of common issues.

These initial assessments involved understanding how buildings work as part of a group but have also, wherever possible, sought to identify potential repairs.

The sample blocks include a range of buildings with varying needs. In each sample block each building has been identified as:

-  Contributing positively to the town centre - they do not need any improvements, or need minor cosmetic improvements such as painting.
-  In need of small improvements such as painting, signage, doorways etc.
-  In need of major improvements such as new windows, render, shopfronts etc

Furthermore, prominent marker buildings that will/do play an important role in the street-scape have also been identified. It is important that proposed changes to these buildings are extremely well considered - these buildings are quite often important corner buildings or have very prominent facades.

-  Prominent marker buildings are further highlighted by a bold black outline and purple star



7.2 Sample Block 1 - Alexandra Road

Alexandra Road is located outside the medieval walls, and development in this area did not begin until the nineteenth century. Alexandra Road itself was probably not developed until after the arrival of the railway in 1864, and some of its most prominent buildings were added at the turn of the C19 and C20. It is characterised by longer rows and large-scale individual buildings.

Characteristics This block on Alexandra Road/Ffordd Alexandra is in a prime location as a gateway into the Town Centre from the train station situated opposite. This block is the largest and most ornately detailed along the street, highlighting its importance. The group of buildings form prominent market buildings along Alexandra Road due to their location and appearance.

Rhythm 'The Cambrian Hotel' (left of block) retains most of its original features including upper windows and eaves detailing. 'Le Figaro' follows the rhythms of the original building well, although the new shop front to 'Cafe Express' does not respect the original form and lines of the building above.

Issues A lack of maintenance of the upper floors has left them distressed and tired looking, with peeling paintwork and vegetation growing from the building. A large yellow advertising banner on 'The Cambrian Hotel' detracts from the quality of the building and hides an interesting balcony.

Opportunities Simple cleaning of brick and stonework and repainting of timber would rejuvenate the block's tired appearance. A new shop front could be reintroduced to 'Cafe Express' that is more in keeping with the building's style and period, following the rhythms of the original fenestrations.



In need of general maintenance

Stone/ brickwork needs cleaning and general maintenance

Windows don't respect original rhythms of the building



Cambrian Hotel

Garish yellow advertising banner detracts from quality of building

Le Figaro

Poor quality projecting sign board

New 'Cafe Express' frontage isn't consistent with original building lines



Existing Building Facade

Windows have been replaced with those that respect the original proportions of the building



Illustrative Recommendations

Smaller fascias have been introduced which follow the original rhythm of the facade, each bounded by traditional cornices

Simplified shop fronts with windows and framing that fit in with the building above. Stall risers follow the rhythm of the rest of the block

Doorways replaced with traditional proportions and smaller panes that fit in with the stall risers of the adjacent shopfronts

One of the main issues of this block is the shop front of 'Cafe Express', highly disrupting the rhythm of the group. A lack of maintenance of the upper floors has also left the buildings looking distressed.

The recommendations on the above show that by reintroducing a new 'Cafe Express' shop front that is in-keeping with the buildings style, and one that follows the rhythm of the block, would make the building work as part of a cohesive group.

7.3 Sample Block 2 - Owain Glyndwr Square

Owain Glyndwr Square lies immediately outside what was once the main gate into the medieval town at the foot of Great Darkgate Street. It was open ground until the end of the eighteenth century when the town began to expand outside the medieval walls for the first time. When Terrace Road was created as the main axis from the railway station to the sea, the area assumed greater prominence in the commercial life of the town. In addition to some good terraces of c1860-70 with distinctive render-work in the upper storeys, it includes some large-scale commercial building with strong individual character.

Characteristics Owain Glyndwr Square sits half way between the railway station and the seafront, and lies along the main shopping street in Aberystwyth. The block consists of 3 storey terraced Victorian buildings with pitched dormers above the eaves line. They retain most of their original architectural features but the quality of the shop fronts vary.

Rhythm The block flows well, although the inconsistency of the shop fronts does break the group rhythm.

Issues The size, scale, prominence and quality of the shop fronts vary dramatically, and the colour scheme of the facades is inconsistent and disjointed.

Opportunities Create a palette of colours which will improve the aesthetics of the block as well as make them work as a group, so that they can be read as a coherent block. A consistent shop front 'style' could be introduced which follows simple rules in terms of materials, scale and signage.





Existing Building Facade

Stall risers have been made consistent so shop units work as a group

Windows now work as part of a cohesive building, which is less fragmented. Entrances are clear and display space is retained on the street front



Illustrative Recommendations

Fascias are now more consistent with adjoining buildings and are contained within cornices with clear signage which does not over dominate the facade

Doorways have been improved with smaller openings that fit in with the rhythm of the facade

The main issue with the block is the break in original rhythm due to inconsistency in shopfronts and added features. The colour scheme adds to this, with a wide colour spectrum used throughout the block, making it seem disjointed.

The recommendation shows a colour scheme that highlights the features of each building whilst also working as a group. Importantly, the colours now do not detract from the features of the facades and shopfronts.

The shopfront features have been improved so that all stall risers, fascias and openings are consistent with the block. Each building works individually, with shop units keeping the same rhythm and colour palette as the upper floors. Dormer gables are consistent with the rest of the facade.

7.4 Sample Block 3 - Pier Street

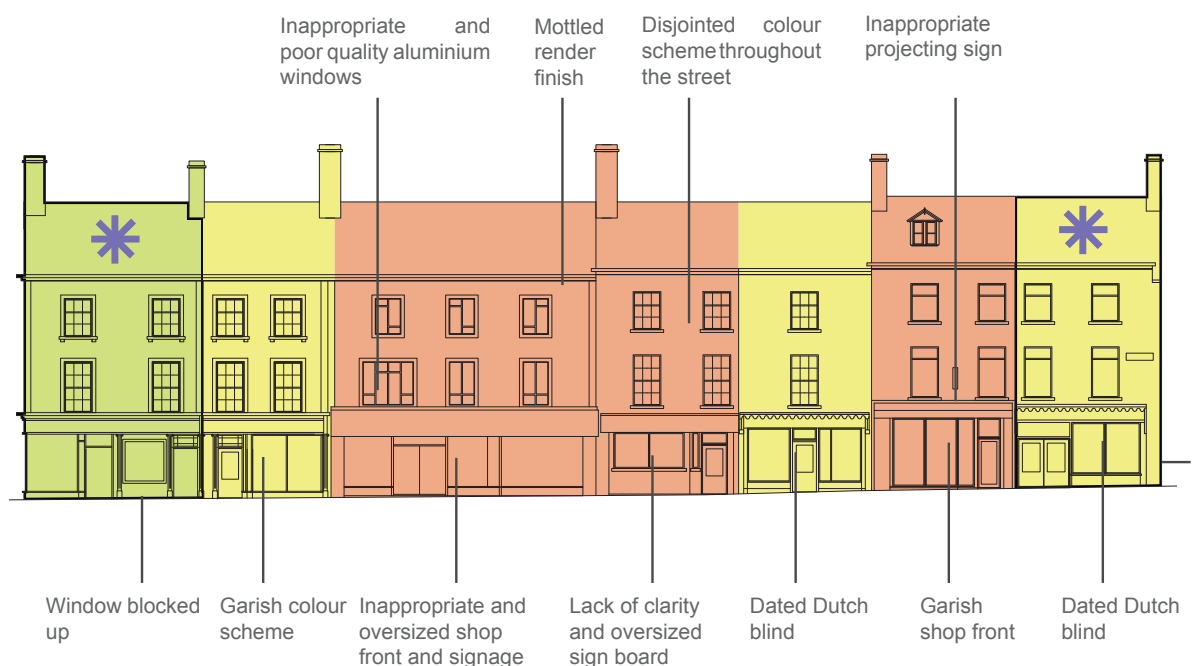
Pier Street was also one of the principal streets of the medieval town but it was probably not completely built up until the nineteenth century, when it acquired greater importance as a main route to the promenade. Most of its buildings retain good nineteenth century character, and the pattern of development reflects the historical plot structure of the medieval town.

Characteristics Pier Street is a busy shopping street with a more intimate scale than that of Great Darkgate Street. It has a mix of independent and chain retail. The street leads directly to the seafront.

Rhythm Relatively consistent building heights and fenestration lines but inconsistent shop front heights, scales and styles.

Issues Inconsistent colour palette and shop front styles, scales and heights.

Opportunities Create a more appropriate style and scale of shop front along the street. Reasonable examples of shop front style and scale can be seen on 'Yankee Candle' and 'Pretty Flamingo'. Poor quality 'Dutch blinds' can be replaced with more traditional blinds, appropriate to the street and area.





Existing Building Facade

A window that previously disrupted the rhythm of the facade have now been replaced with one which is in-keeping

Large dominating fascias have now been reduced and extended across the whole facade and contained by traditional cornices



Illustrative Recommendations

Doorways are replaced with traditional proportions with smaller panes that respect the rhythm of the building

Stall risers are now even throughout the street

The buildings on Pier Street have relatively consistent building heights but inconsistent shop front heights, scales and styles. The colour palette is also very inconsistent.

The recommendations show a more consistent group of shopfronts. Stall risers have been made consistent throughout the street, as well as fascias. The fascias are now matching with the proportions of the building.

Doorways have been improved by introducing clear openings and proportions that fit in with the rest of the shopfront.

Windows in upper floors have been improved where these did not match the original proportions of the building. Inappropriate canopies have also been removed to ensure unobstructed views down the street towards the sea front.

7.5

Case Studies

Harry's, 40-46 North Parade

The recent improvement of Harry's has restored a number of original features, particularly to the building on the left hand side which suffered from the loss of the original pitch roof.

Inappropriate box dormer windows have been removed and replaced with a style which is consistent with others in the terrace. Decorative detailing around the windows has been pronounced using paint. Inappropriate top floor windows on the left hand side have been removed, new traditional style windows have been installed and the level of the eaves has been raised to match the building adjacent. The pitch roof has successfully been reinstated.

This has resulted in a distinctive building which complements others around and adds to the group value of surrounding buildings and the Conservation Area.



Harry's, 40-46 North Parade

17 and 19 Pier Street

These two buildings were in a fairly good condition originally with very few major issues. The colour scheme of the buildings but meant that the upper floors appeared more prominent than the ground floor and shopfront in particular. A boarded over shop window detracted from number 17.

The refurbished buildings are of a much higher quality. The use of a darker colour for the shopfront has appropriately shifted the prominence from the upper floors to the ground floor. The continuation of a muted shade of the shopfront colour throughout the upper floors has meant that the buildings harmonise with one another and read as a whole, separated vertically by pilasters and masonry bands. The buildings complement one another whilst having an individual identity.



19 Pier Street

17 Pier Street

The Tan Shop, 1 Eastgate

The windows on the first floor have been replaced with traditional sash windows. The middle window on the first floor has had its opening made shorter so that the sill is realigned with the adjacent sills. The fascia depth corresponds with the shop adjacent. The owner has added some artisan detailing and included a new mural to add interest to the prominent gable wall end.

The building now works better as a group with the neighbouring building. The colour choice and artisan detailing has added considerably to the streetscape.



1 Eastgate



8 Design Elements

8.1 Fascias

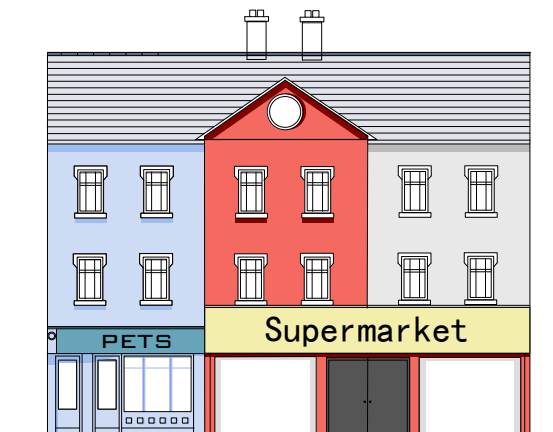
- Where appropriate, fascias should be finished by a neat well defined cornice and architrave. In a traditional design the fascia is normally positioned between the consoles which form 'bookends' to the fascia. The fascia, therefore, should be the same height as the console. Where there is no console or capital to reference, the fascia should reference buildings of similar scale and design in the surrounding area.
- Fascia height and alignment should retain historic proportions. Where original features have been lost, historic photos should be referenced to gain an understanding of the scale of the fascia. Where there is no historic information to reference, size should be in keeping with the proportions of the building, paying reference to surrounding buildings. Whilst variety in fascia height contributes to the character of the area there should be a general uniformity.
- Avoid treating clerestories in a way which make them look like a continuation of the fascia (i.e. by placing additional signage within them). This can imbalance the already established proportions of the buildings.
- Oversized fascias-boards, oversized writing and unsuitable materials such as plastic will not be permitted.
- Fascias should not obscure, damage or project in front of visually and historically significant architectural details.



This fascia is in proportion and ties in with the building frontage as a whole



This poor quality fascia dominates the shopfront



Lacks proportion and relationship with the rest of the building



A Consistent fascia relates to the adjacent shopfront and the rest of the building

Pilasters and Vertical Elements

8.2



Vertical masonry bands in a continuing colour extend from the pilasters to further define and 'frame' the upper floors

- Pilasters provide vertical framing to the shopfront and establish visual and physical separations between the adjoining shopfronts. Removed or damaged pilasters should be repaired or reinstated to maintain building rhythm.
- The choice of materials for new pilasters should be compatible with the building design, the adjoining building and the street scene. Pilasters throughout Aberystwyth are predominantly timber and rendered with some masonry examples.
- Adding vertical elements such as mullions can be employed to break up a shop front and help avoid using large areas of glazing.
- Pilasters in the shopfront can be continued on to the upper floors as masonry bands. These should be a similar width and colour palette to the pilaster.

Stallriser

8.3



This historic photo shows a pharmacist in Aberystwyth which adopted a low stallriser to display their goods



A lack of stallriser results in a poor quality shopfront and doesn't frame displays well.

- Stallrisers typically form the 'base' to the building. They help to make the shopfront more secure and traditionally were used to raise the level of the window display. The height of the stallriser would have then been determined by the nature of the goods on display - for example a jeweller or butcher would like their goods to be closer to eye level so would employ a taller stallriser. Whereas, a clothes shop would like to maximise the visibility of their goods on display resulting in a lower stallriser.
- Modern retailers should take the same approach. Shops glazed to the floor level are unlikely to be acceptable given that a stallriser has both a functional and visual role to play.
- Similarly, designs which employ stallrisers which are too tall are also unlikely to be acceptable. As a general rule their height should not exceed 25% of the total shopfront height.

8.4 Doors & Thresholds

The Equality Act 2010 gives less able people important rights of access to everyday services. Some of the Acts powers are implemented through Part M of The Building Regulations (Access to and Use of Buildings), which sets out statutory provisions for minimum standards relating to entrances of public and commercial buildings.

The document provides specific guidance details for level, ramped or stepped accesses. Dimensions, characteristics and layout of doorways including aspects of material finishes to be used, need to be determined as should methods enabling access for people with limited physical dexterity or visual impairment. These standards apply to all new buildings, extensions and alterations to and about entrances, including listed buildings.

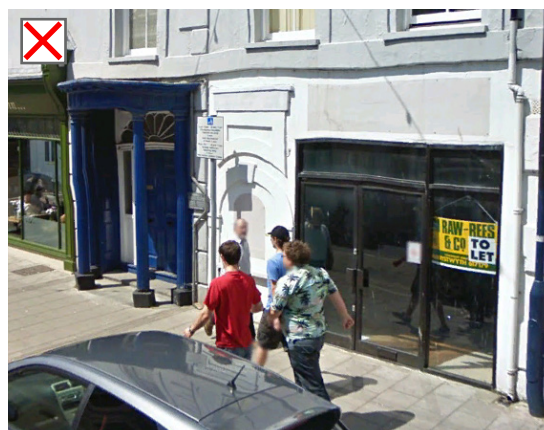
It is important that applicants can demonstrate that they can simultaneously satisfy Part M of The Building Regulations and the accessibility of the Equality Act without having a negative impact on the historic character of the building. In listed buildings some access improvements cannot always be implemented.

Access can be improved by adhering to the following principles:

- Entrances should be level or ramped (no greater than 1:14) with a minimum 12000mm front width and 800mm door width wherever possible.
- Handles should be easy to grasp and offer support.
- A rail should be provided at the entrance and/or across the door no higher than 1000mm off from the ground.
- Long tubular handles and handles with returns are better than pad handles.
- Doors should be lightweight.
- Signs such as 'push', 'pull' etc. should be clearly legible.
- Substantially glazed doorways should be clearly identified ensuring that people with visual impairment are in no doubt as to the location of the door.
- Ironmongery should contrast visually with the surface of the door.



A doorway which is appropriate to the shopfront and well pronounced



The doorway and shopfront on the right of image are out of proportion and inappropriate. The double doors take up the majority of the shopfront



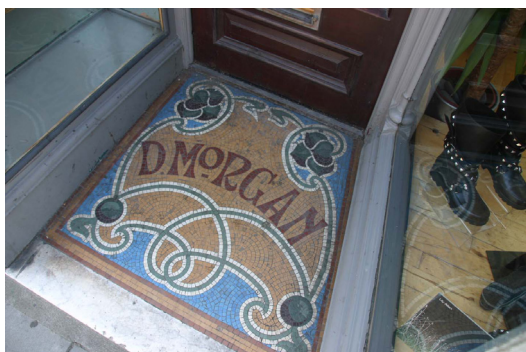
Examples of some of the traditional doorways which exist in Aberystwyth Town Centre

The location and style of the door should always reflect the style and character of the rest of the shopfront and period of the building. The doorway should retain a proportion which is consistent with the rest of the building and adjoining buildings.

A large number of the doorways in Aberystwyth are recessed and splayed. These are common elements in Victorian and Edwardian shopfronts. It is important that original recessed doorways are retained and enhanced, particularly where decorative mosaic tile work is used in the threshold between the pavement and shop door. They add richness and character to the streetscene.

Other traditional shop entrances contained decorative elements such as panelled soffits, ornate ironmongery, glazed panelled doors and concertina or hinged security gates. Wherever possible these should be retained and enhanced.

Where access to upper floors is needed at the front of the property, their design and location should match the rest of the shopfront style, but be recognisable as a private access.



Mosaic 'welcome mats' like this one on Pier Street should be retained



An example of the retention and refurbishment of existing decorative security gates



Secondary access to the upper floors is less pronounced than the shop entrance but still appropriate to the facade


8.5 Windows

Original windows and glazing are important features of historic buildings. The shop window should be transparent and clearly display the goods on sale. Treatments to glazing such as panelling, etching and frosting should be kept to a very minimum and be used for decorative purposes only. The subtle use of etched graphics and wording in particular can supplement the main signage in a sympathetic manner. This should be proportional to the windows, the shopfront and the building as a whole.


Likewise, other elements such as glazing bars, mullions and transoms should also retain a scale and proportion which is consistent with the rest of the building. These elements in particular should be designed to reflect the architectural period of the shopfront and building. Historically, these elements would be fabricated from timber. Modern plastic and aluminium can have a negative visual impact and will not be permitted.

The windows on the upper floors are equally as important as shopfront windows. Applicants are strongly advised to retain and repair their original timber or metal windows. Inappropriate replacements should be removed and restored with good quality appropriately styled units wherever possible.



 In this sample block some of the shopfronts have lost their appropriate proportions. Large areas of glazing dominate the facade.



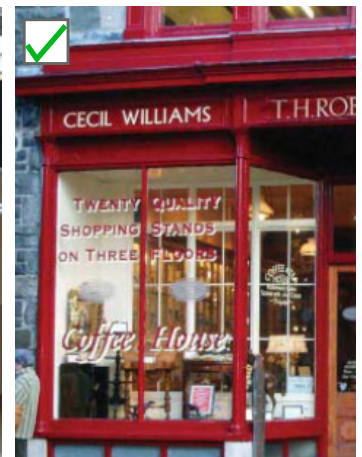
 This illustrates a more appropriate shop window treatment including the introduction of mullions and transoms.



'On window' signage completely obscures views into the shop creating an oppressive and unwelcoming shopfront



Frosted/etched glass can be used to provide additional signage



Sensitively applied, hand painted window signage can improve the appearance of a shopfront



The windows surrounds are an inconsistent colour that do not match the shopfront



Window surrounds and sills match the shopfront creating a harmonious facade



Examples of good quality, authentic uPVC heritage windows

Where replacements are absolutely necessary they should be carried out using the same materials and design details that identically replicate the originals. Where retention of the original windows is not possible, the replacements will need to be appropriate styled, which would typically include the following qualities:

- Grained effect giving the appearance of painted white timber
- Authentically shaped, surface mounted, external glazing bars (where appropriate)
- Appropriate and authentic window casing/ rail widths. For example, many traditional sash windows have a deeper bottom rail.
- Authentic replica joints such as 'mortice' and 'tenon' joints
- Like for like styling
- The position of mullions and transoms should conform to original windows or others in the immediate area
- traditional window design including fully operational sliding sashes where appropriate;
- traditional timber window frame dimensions and proportions, with traditional detailing; and,
- overall it must be of a design which is indistinguishable from a traditional timber sash window when viewed from outside the building.

The use of uPVC replacements are discouraged. Where it is proposed that uPVC units are installed, they must display high levels of craftsmanship and conform to the above qualities and should be difficult to differentiate from original timber windows.

There is scope to introduce colour to the window surrounds and/or sills - colours of these should relate directly to the colours used on the shopfront.

8.6

Roofs

When planning works to a roof it is important to understand its contribution to the building's appearance and the character of the Conservation Area.

The significance of a roof is derived from its age, functional performance, shape, pitch, profile, materials and associated features. These elements combine to give a building its character and should be respected when any repair or alteration work is proposed. The prevalent style of roof in Aberystwyth is the traditional pitched roof with deep eaves often supported on ornamental brackets. Some post-war infill development utilise a flat roof.

Materials

The prevalent roof material in Aberystwyth is slate, with instances of clay on some early twentieth-century buildings. Slate is typically used in thin slabs of uniform thickness and uniform size; courses are regular. It is important when carrying out repairs and replacements that the correct colour and thickness of slate is selected. Slates should be laid the same as existing, where there is a pattern or style for example. Reclaimed second-hand slate can be used but should be carefully selected to ensure an even colour.

Welsh slate replacements are the most appropriate as they are most durable and visually appropriate. Imported slates should be used with caution, particularly on listed buildings, as they are different colours and textures to Welsh slate. Similarly, artificial or reconstituted slate is also unacceptable because it does not match the durability and weathering qualities of natural slate.

Chimneys

Chimneys are a conspicuous feature of Aberystwyth's townscape and contribute to a strong vertical rhythm. Chimney stacks should always be maintained at their original height. Where they have previously been altered in the past, consideration should be given to reconstructing them back to their original form, particularly when they form part of a uniform group across a terrace/row. Chimney pots should be repaired and reinstated wherever possible.



Aberystwyth's interesting and varied skyline is a strong part of the character of the town



An example of a slate roof and a red clay tile building in close proximity. Both buildings have deep eaves with ornate brackets



Chimneys are a key feature and add rhythm to the streetscape



Box dormer windows do not match others in the street and are not acceptable.

Roof Extensions

Removal of a roof and replacement with an additional storey, or storeys, should only be considered where the existing roof is not of significance to the character of the building and Conservation Area. Roof extensions which propose a significant removal or alteration of an otherwise good historic structure are not acceptable, particularly where a visual impact is envisaged.

Alterations to the pitch of a traditional roof will be resisted. Gable features, finials and other items at roof level should be retained and refurbished. Similarly, where they are missing and there is historic/contextual evidence of their existence, they should be reinstated.

Any work to roofs, soffits etc. could potentially affect bats or their roosts. Opportunities to enhance provision for bats should be considered.

Dormers and Rooflights

The addition of windows to principal or prominent roof slopes in particular, should generally be avoided. Appropriately designed dormers, located appropriately are less likely to detract from a building's character than large or inappropriate ones. Historic dormers should be retained and refurbished and where evidence exists, recreated. Box dormers are generally unacceptable as they do not adhere to a general style prevalent in Aberystwyth, they will therefore be unacceptable in most circumstances.

Dormer windows are a particularly prominent feature on North Parade and Owain Glyndwr Square - they are characteristic of buildings in this area and therefore, proposed removal or unsympathetic restoration will be resisted. The proposal of new dormers and/or the reinstatement of dormers in this area should match in with the existing forms.

Modern rooflights should be avoided due to their style and considerable upstand. Traditional style rooflights will be considered provided that they are in a suitable location and do not visually dominate or substantially alter the appearance of the roof.



Ornate detailing around an original dormer window



Characteristic dormer windows on Owain Glyndwr Square

8.7 Drainage & Guttering

Rainwater goods are an essential element of any roofing system. During the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, gutters and downpipes were traditionally made of lead with lead hopper heads at the top of downpipes and discharge chutes often made into decorative features. Where lead rainwater goods exist they should always be retained and refurbished.

Cast iron rainwater goods are most common in Aberystwyth as they became prevalent in the nineteenth century. Cast iron is the preferred material for use in the Conservation Area and particularly important on listed buildings. It is very important, however, that cast iron drainage is well maintained as leaks are a frequent source of water ingress into historic buildings. Typically cast iron is black, but can also be painted to match the colour of any render - camouflaging the down pipe.

Although they are not as durable as cast iron, aluminium rainwater goods may also be acceptable, they should be painted black or in a colour which matches the rest of the building facade, ensuring that it blends in with the building, reducing its prominence. Painting downpipes in a very bright and contrasting colour to the main facade which makes them stand out should be avoided. Plastic rainwater goods may also be acceptable in certain areas but only if they are black and where all other remaining original features (eg cast iron hopper heads) are retained.



This downpipe is painted the same colour as the render to camouflage it



Example of an original downpipe with decorative hopper head



Box illuminating signs like this one will not be permitted



A successful example of backlit lettering



Focussed lighting highlights signage and displays effectively



A discretely lit hanging sign

Lighting should be considered as part of the overall design rather than a later addition. Subtle lighting can add vitality to the night time street scene. Poorly designed illuminated signs can look garish rather than stylish - these will not be permitted. Over-illumination must be avoided as it can upset the balance of light by conflicting with street lighting.

External Lighting: Ideally light sources should be concealed and carefully directed at the fascia, avoiding glare. The lighting units themselves should be as subtle as possible and not divert any attention away from the fascia.

Suitable lamp types could include tungsten halogen floods, tungsten spotlights, low voltage tungsten and LED spotlights, swan-necked metal arms and concealed fluorescent tubes. All wiring and trunking should be concealed behind the fascia.

Backlit Lettering: Translucent plastic letters or graphics inset into an opaque panel and illuminated from behind may be an acceptable and discrete way of lighting the fascia given that the light box is fully recessed behind the fascia.

Individual Halo Lettering: Individual letters can stand proud of a surface and be lit from behind to produce a halo effect; a treatment which is suitable for fascias or wall mounting. Where this method is used it should be subtle and good quality individual letters should be used. Plastic lettering is not acceptable for listed buildings,

Cool Cathode Tubes: Graphically elegant neon signs may only be acceptable if they are of moderate size, single colour and limited palette.

Hanging and Projecting Signs: Box illuminated signs in any form are not acceptable. However, well crafted, elegant signs making use of thin fluorescent tubes so only the lettering or graphic is illuminated may be considered. Illumination for hanging signs should be external, subtle and well directed.

Building Illumination: Shopwindow display lighting contributes to a safe night-time environment. Discrete spotlighting to highlight architectural features of the building is welcomed.

8.9 Canopies & Blinds

Blinds serve to protect perishable goods from deterioration due to strong sunlight and inclement weather and help to keep the interior cool. Projecting roller blinds are the preferred solution as they form an integral part of the shopfront and are retractable when not required.

Dutch canopies are made from canvas or plastic over a metal frame. They hide architectural details and interrupt the building elevation. They also have little reference to the town's heritage, where traditional roller blinds and canopies were common. Also shops have a tendency to leave them open which results in deterioration of the fabric and a scruffy appearance. Dutch canopies are therefore not acceptable and will not be permitted throughout Aberystwyth.

Highway regulations require the outer edge of the blind to be set back at least 1m from the kerb and the outer and inner ends of the supporting arms not less than 2.1m above the pavement. Property owners should choose blinds and canopies to suit the style of the frontage. For example, a fully retractable canvas blind, best complements a traditional property. For areas or buildings of special character it would usually be the only suitable type. 'Blind laths' should be used as the mechanism for retracting the canopy or blind. This then forms part of the cornice so that it is barely visible when not in use.

The number, shape and size of canopies used should relate to the structural form of the shop unit. Separate canopies should be used above doors or windows for example. They should sit within, not over, pilasters. Blinds should be located beneath the fascia so that the shop sign is still visible. Large or long stretches of canopy which overwhelm a building or the street scene should be avoided. A single canopy should not span across more than one structural bay.

When adding canopies or redesigning a shopfront, integrate them into the overall scheme. Individual designs, shapes and colours should fit in with the shop and not clash with others nearby. Choose materials that withstand weathering. Wherever possible the name of the shop should also be included upon the blind.



A historic photo of Pier Street shows the common use of roller blinds



Dutch awnings or canopies will not be accepted.



Traditional roller blinds which can be discreetly hidden away within a fascia providing an attractive and usable space in front of the retail unit

Shopfronts should be designed using materials that make burglary and petty vandalism very difficult. It is recommended that a sliding scale of shopfront security should be adopted to ensure that security measures do not compromise the quality of the environment. External box roller shutters will only be permitted in the most extreme circumstances. In addition to physical barriers and secure glass, reinforced stallrisers can help to mitigate ram raiding and are an option for more vulnerable premises.

Removable or retractable internal grilles, screens and shutters are the preferred approach. These should not compromise the attractiveness of the shop window and be retracted out of sight during opening hours. These should be installed so that the mechanism cannot be seen from the outside, i.e. behind the fascia.

Where it is not possible or practical to install a retractable internal security grille or mesh, a fixed system is the next best approach. However, this must be designed so that it does not dominate the window display and or the appearance of the shopfront.

Where internal security devices cannot be installed, external systems are the next most appropriate solution. These should be of a perforated variety so they are not visually imposing but prevent entry. Again the mechanism for retracting these should have a minimal impact on the appearance of the shopfront.

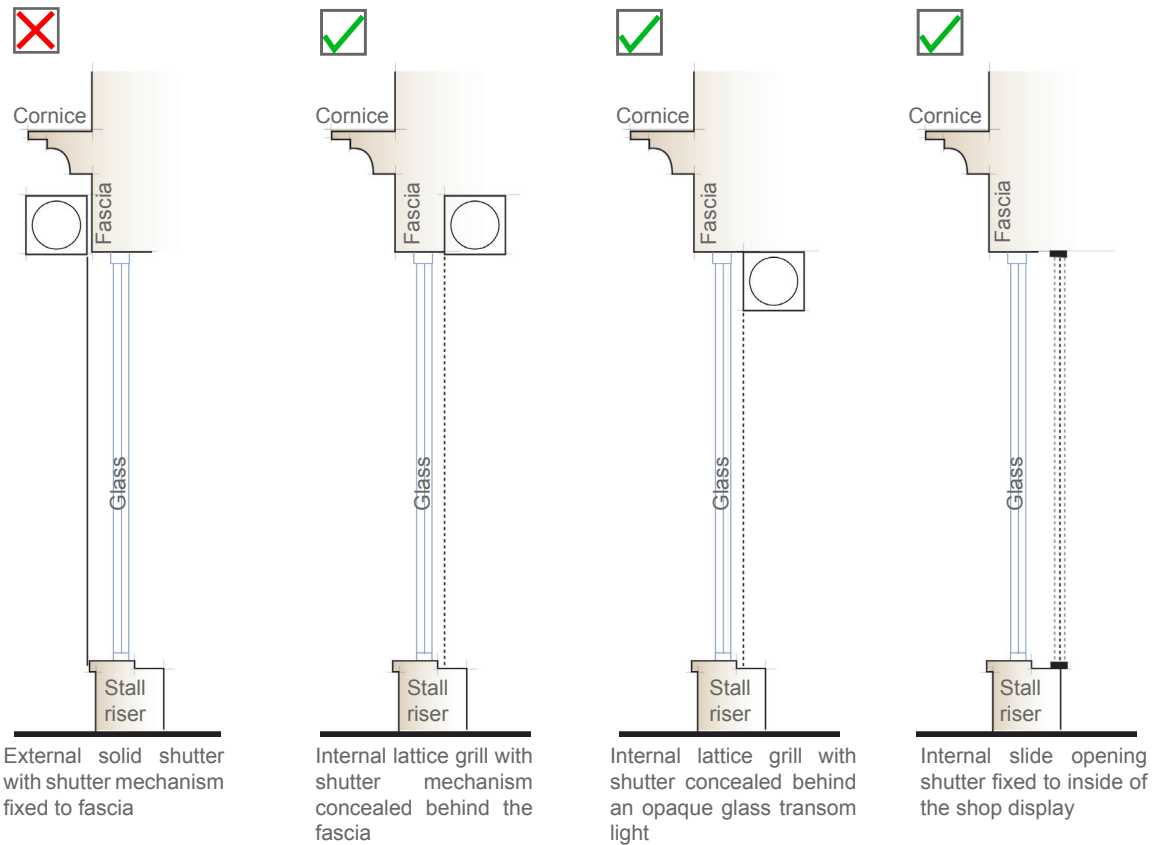
Laminated Glass

Laminated glass should be used on all schemes. Laminated glass resists penetration – the outer glass may break but interlayer retains overall integrity and continues to act as a barrier. It therefore protects against break-ins by preventing or slowing down burglary attempts. Laminated glass protects against vandalism and brief attacks using easily available objects. It is capable of withstanding repeated blows from heavy objects such as bricks, hammers, crowbars and similar hand held heavy objects.

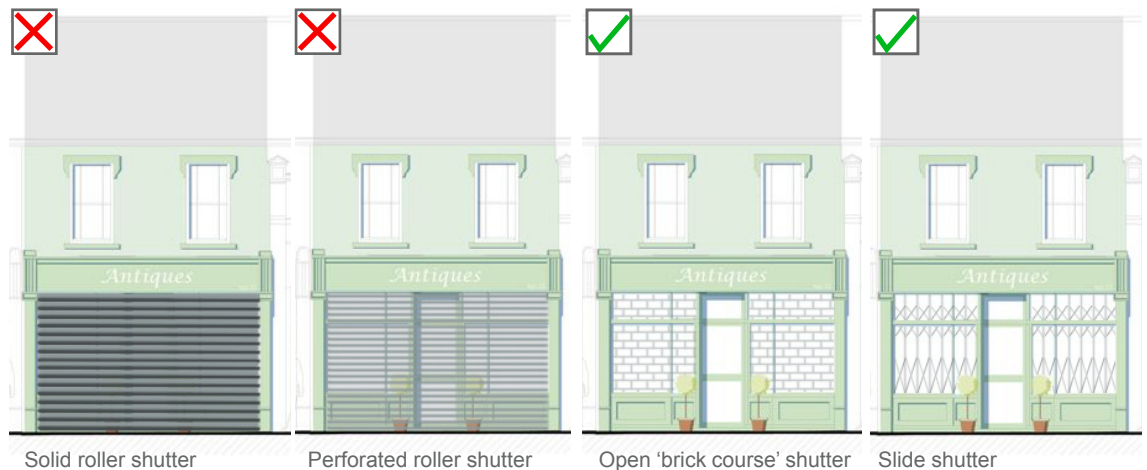
The correct grade and thickness specified for the application depends on the value of goods on display, degree of risk, estimated time needed by thieves to break in and enter. Using this type of glass will negate the need for roller shutters.



The scenarios below outline how security grilles should be integrated into the shopfront. Grilles on the exterior of the shopfront will not be permitted.



The scenarios below outline the types of shutters and grilles which may or may not be acceptable.



Signage

8.11



Oversized text and poor quality materials are not acceptable.



An excellent example of simple hand painted signage that fits appropriately to the scale of the shopfront and matches with hanging signage and an A board.



An example of clear, simple and distinctive signage appropriate to the context



An example of sympathetic corporate branding within a historically sensitive area

A business is most easily identified if it has only one or two clear signs. Primarily, signage should be displayed upon a shopfront fascia. Other areas of the shopfront which may be suitable for accommodating signage include glazing lettering and hanging signs.

Repetition should be avoided and additional signs on the storeys above the shop will not be suitable. Using signs provided by advertisers will erode the simplicity of the building and make groups of buildings appear cluttered and should be avoided. Free-standing illuminated signs hung within the window-display should also be avoided.

Where there are businesses on upper floors, simple window etchings are acceptable with the potential for further discrete signage above or next to (on a plaque for example) any entrance doorway.

Lettering and graphics should be moderately sized and should be in proportion to the dimensions of the fascia. A traditional sign comprising of a painted timber background with hand painted lettering is particularly appropriate for traditional buildings. Raised metal or timber letters may be acceptable (they are prevalent on banks and pubs for example) but garish shiny plastics are not suitable. Clear well spaced letters are as easy to read as larger oversized letters. The sign should be limited to the name of the shop with a simple graphic logo and the street number. Too much information creates visual clutter and will not be acceptable.

Hanging signs should be suspended from the fascia above using brackets which suit the style of the building. The height of these signs should not exceed the width of the fascia, should be at least 2400mm from pavement level and should not project more than 800mm from the building. Projecting box signs will not be acceptable.

Corporate signage and branding should not dictate the style of the shopfront, the signage and the appearance of the fascia. Corporate identity should be appropriate to the scale and character of the building as a whole. It should not overpower the aesthetic and needs to be carefully considered. Applicants are expected to display signage in both English and Welsh where appropriate.

8.12**Detail & Richness**

Part of Aberystwyth's current charm is derived from the richness and detailing found in the architectural elements of the town. It is important that where these features exist, they are retained. Where these features have been lost, they should be researched and restored. Where entirely new shopfronts and building frontages are proposed, contemporary artisan details which are sympathetic to the character of the wider area should be proposed. This will ensure a rich and varied palette of features, touches and detailing across the town centre.

High quality detailing has many benefits including:

- Adding richness and interest
- Contributing a layer of individuality to each building and/or shopfront
- Creating a sense of architectural depth to the town
- Avoiding the use of repetitious 'off the shelf' solutions

Of the examples of fine detailing already in Aberystwyth there are numerous examples of:

- Mosaic fascias and signage
- Mosaic welcome thresholds
- Embossed capitals and keystones
- Carved consoles/corbels and pilasters
- Decorative mouldings in plaster and carvings in stone
- Ornate stonework pilasters on the upper levels
- Decorative eaves brackets
- Ornate dormer window detail
- Decorative window surrounds on the upper levels

Applicants will need to demonstrate where and how they intend to add richness and individuality to their proposals. Collaborations with artisans and craftspeople is encouraged.



A palette of just some of the details which are present in Aberystwyth including decorative pilasters, mosaic fascias, attractive transom lights, ornate tile work and decorative mouldings. Detailing adds richness and distinctiveness to the streetscape. Artistic and interesting details which are appropriate should be introduced to all new and contemporary shopfronts and building facades.

8.13

Materials**Surface Treatment/Building Facades**

Prevalent exterior building finishes in Aberystwyth are stone, brick and render with some terracotta and limestone surfaces. The architectural finish of buildings in the town contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. As a general rule, building treatments should be conserved as found and improved where needed. It is, however, sometimes desirable to encourage removal of unsatisfactory alterations which enclose or change earlier work of importance.

Masonry

- Applicants should provide a full specification for any new stonework to ensure appropriateness in terms of colour, grain, strength and durability.
- Damaged/decayed whole stones should be cut out and replaced.
- Redressing stonework causes damage and will not be accepted.
- Surface repairs using mortar will generally not be permitted. Patching using specialised mortars may be appropriate in small areas where stonework is to be replaced.
- Mortars used should not be synthetic or cementitious as this may lead to further damage of the stonework. Cement patching will not be acceptable.
- Pointing should always be weaker than the surrounding stone. Hard, dense mortars generally have the effect of increasing rather than decreasing the risks of water penetration and stone decay. Lime pointing should therefore be used in most instances, never hard grey cement.

Rendered and Painted Frontages

- Repairs of old plaster should be attempted rather than the complete renewal of the render.
- Repairs should be as close as possible a 'like-for-like' match to the surrounding backing and surface plaster. The texture and thickness of coats should be based on that of the original plaster.
- Hard cement renders are generally incompatible with traditional buildings. Lime plasters are more porous and flexible, allowing the building to "breathe".
- Colours which are historically suitable to the building and surroundings should be used.
- Colours should relate to the architectural features of the whole building. A palette which may be suitable has been suggested on the following page. Paint used should be porous.

Shopfront Materials

The materials used for individual shopfronts should be influenced by the building of which they form a part of. The use of traditional materials such as painted timber should be a common starting point.

There will be more scope to use modern materials on newer buildings in the town. However, designers must avoid the use of acrylic sheeting, Perspex, plastic, standard natural finish aluminium and unpainted softwoods.



















Colour

Garish or lurid colour schemes will not be encouraged. Monotone, muted, matt finish paint combinations can result in a stylish high quality scheme. These types of colours will promote an image of sophistication and be appropriate to the heritage context. Gloss finish paints should be avoided as they can appear brash. Painted timber is preferable to stained or varnished hardwoods.



















Solvent free, organic based paints and pigments should be considered for all buildings. Refer to paint manufacturer's specialist historic colour charts for properties of a specific period.

Shopfronts and rendered buildings painted in conservation flat tones will contribute to a uniform and complementary appearance but still allow for personal or corporate style. This combined with the existing brick, terracotta and unfinished stone buildings will create an attractive historic environment.

Colours for the shopfronts and rendered buildings should reflect the historic character of the architecture. Deeper hues should be considered for the shop fronts within the main commercial areas such as Great Darkgate Street. The original shops within the area date from the Victorian and Edwardian era, traditionally these would have been painted with deeper tones. Deeper tones create a greater contrast between the shop front and the window display, drawing attention to the goods on sale. Some suggested colour combinations which may be appropriate are outlined below:

Shopfront									
Rendered Upper Floors									

The smaller side streets which are a mixture of residential and commercial uses should use lighter tones to demonstrate the shift in uses and the different scale and character.

Shopfront/ Detailing									
Upper Floor (where white/ off white is not used)									

Some ideas for the kinds of colours that would be encouraged by the County Borough Council are outlined below. Some RAL codes for colours that are consistent with this palette are as follows:

- RAL 9007 - Grey aluminium
- RAL 7032 - Pebble Grey
- RAL 5014 - Pigeon Blue
- RAL 3016 - Coral Red
- RAL 6013 - Reed Green
- RAL 5023 - Distant Blue
- RAL 6034 - Pastel Turquoise

Generally, lighter tones should be used for the upper floors of a building (where they are rendered) to provide appropriate contrast. Where there is a desire to deviate away from this (perhaps with a lighter hue for the shop front), the merits of doing so should be demonstrated and be appropriate to the building and immediate context.

The colour tones outlined on the previous page are guidelines not rules. It is important that applicants consider the needs of their building as well as individual design flair when choosing a colour palette. It is, however, important that applicants are able to demonstrate that their proposals will add to the quality and character of the street.

Decoration

There is scope to add extra components to the building that will enhance both the frontage and the streetscape. Brackets for hanging baskets can be incorporated but they must be an integral part of design and not a later addition. They should also adhere to the general character of the building and shopfront. Well maintained hanging baskets can have a considerable impact upon a retail centre. Potted plants can also welcome visitors into a business, but care should be taken not to obscure convenient access to the unit.

Other decorative elements such as lights, door furniture and tiling can add richness and distinctiveness to the building and contribute to the a high quality town centre.



A well considered colour scheme along with hanging baskets and window boxes contributes to an attractive streetscene.

This Supplementary Planning Guidance has been prepared to raise the general standard of commercial building design in Aberystwyth Town Centre.

The quality of the design of building facades in the town and the attention to maintenance and repair can have a considerable impact upon the visual quality, distinctiveness and identity of the town. This is particularly important given the town's designation as a Conservation Area.

It is of utmost importance that facades are designed with due regard to their surroundings, their scale and their importance in the overall streetscene. If it is deemed that a facade proposal does not fit in with its context, then it will not be acceptable. Designs need to enhance the character of the area they are situated within, particularly where a listed building is concerned.

Even the design of shopfronts and facades on relatively modern buildings can have an important role in creating a high quality townscape. A demonstration that regard has been paid to the character of the town and proportions of typical historic features is important for contemporary schemes within a historic centre.

Planning applications for improvements, repairs and modifications to building facades that demonstrate compatibility with these guidelines are more likely to be viewed positively by Ceredigion County Council.