



UPPER HOLTON ROAD DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE



Contents

Background	5
Status of the guidance	
Purpose of the guidance	
National guidance	
The Adopted Unitary Development Plan	
Local Development Plan	
Guidance	12
Retail core	
Shopfronts: The traditional approach	
Principles for shopfront design	
Design criteria for alterations or replacement of shopfronts	
Materials & details	
Fascia	
Stall risers	
Access	
Blinds & canopies	
Shopfront security	
Security shutter design	
Shutter housing	
Advertisements	22
Fascia signs	
Projecting & hanging signs	
Signs on windows & doors	
Illumination	
Conversion of commercial premises	25
Visual impact of conversion	
Use of materials	
Appropriate windows	
Removal of fascia sign	
Retaining evidence of original use	
Shops that were originally houses	
Access to other units	
Amenity space	
Provision of parking	
Planning permission	31
Advertisement consent	
Applying for planning permission	
Building regulations	
Further information	33
Appendix 1	35
Appendix 2	37

Background

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) has been prepared to assist the Council, private landowners and developers in formulating and reviewing proposals for the built environment within Upper Holton Road. Map 1 contained within Appendix 1 demonstrates the area to which this guidance relates.

The guidelines have been prepared following the publication of a Town and District Retail Centre Appraisal published by Martin Tonks Consultants in 2009. The Martin Tonks appraisal provided an update of the Upper Holton Road district centre health check which had previously been undertaken as part of the Barry Town Centre Living Study. The appraisal examined the vitality and viability of the Upper Holton Road district centre and provided baseline information to inform the emerging Local Development Plan (LDP). The relevant section of the Martin Tonks report relating to Upper Holton Road can be found in Appendix 2 of this guidance.

The report highlighted a general lack of vitality. The environmental quality of the Upper Holton Road shopping centre was shown to be very poor, with the area suffering from a lack of care and investment, high vacancy rates and a number of poorly altered and converted premises. The report recommended that the centre should be re-designated as a local centre and that it should be consolidated around a retail core. Outside of this retail core it was recommended that land use changes should be encouraged to make the area predominantly residential in character.

The findings of the Martin Tonks appraisal were endorsed by Cabinet on 15th July 2009 (Minute No. C532 refers) and have informed the preparation of this SPG.

Meanwhile, the Castleland area of Barry was officially declared a Renewal Area on April 28th 2010. The Renewal Area, which has been designated until 2022, aims to reverse the decline of the area by improving housing, general amenities and the local environment, develop partnerships,

increase community and market confidence and maximise external investment into the area. A key aspect of this has been to improve the character of the Castleland area through on-going face-lifting works to the existing residential stock. The Renewal Area extends from the west side of Hill Street to the Gladstone Road junction with Broad Street and from the shops north of Holton Road to Dock View Road. This area includes the Upper Holton Road retail centre. It is therefore deemed a very appropriate time to introduce planning guidance to address the issues within Upper Holton Road, as outlined by the Martin Tonks study, and to ensure that the future development of this local retail centre complements the regeneration aspirations of the Castleland Renewal Area.

Status of the Guidance

Only policies in the Development Plan can have the special status afforded by Section 38(6) of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Welsh Government advises that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) may be a material consideration provided it is consistent with the Development Plan, the weight afforded to it being increased if it has been prepared in consultation with the general public and interested parties and if it has been the subject of a Council resolution.

The guidance was approved by Cabinet as a draft for consultation on 16th November 2011 (Minute No. C1521 refers) following consultation with Planning Committee and the Council's Economy and Environment Scrutiny Committee. A 10 week public consultation exercise was carried out between 4th January 2012 and 14th March 2012. Where appropriate, this guidance has been amended to take account of the views received.

The final draft SPG was approved in July 2012.

Purpose of the Guidance

The deterioration of the visual appearance of Upper Holton Road retail centre is widely acknowledged and it is clear that the excess of poorly designed and maintained shopfronts has a considerable contribution to the poor impression that the area provides to both visitors and retail confidence.

The main aims of this SPG are to set out the best practice principles for shopfront design and advertisements, to help improve the general streetscene and provide more detailed guidance to the policies contained within the Council's Development Plan. The SPG will also form a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and appeals. A good quality shopfront displays business confidence, which encourages shopper confidence. So, improving the attractiveness of shopfronts can help to strengthen the local economy, as well as enhancing the street scene.

Despite initial appearances, behind the muddle of poor quality shopfronts and signage, there are many buildings of distinctive quality within this part of Holton Road, which if allowed to, could contribute a great deal more to the character of the town.

This guidance seeks to extend beyond advice for shopfronts and advertisements though. It is recognised that the market for retail provision in this area is diminishing due to current economic and retail trends. This is highlighted by both the high number of vacant units, as well as an increasing number of alternative uses, such as residential, being proposed or emerging within the area.

Currently the size of the local centre, for which retail uses should be favoured and protected, is too considerable. Consequently, the increase in vacant and non-retail properties has diluted the retail function of this local retail centre, to the detriment of the vitality of the area. It is unrealistic to believe that demand for retail properties in this centre is likely to significantly rise in the near future.

Nevertheless, it is considered that local retail centres still perform a valuable role in sustaining the needs of local residents and reducing the requirement to travel. It is therefore important to ensure that the role of a local retail centre is maintained. As such, in line with the recommendation of the Martin Tonks Study (2009) the guidance will identify a retail core, within the Upper Holton Road local retail centre, which retail activity should be consolidated around and afforded greater protection.

Outside of this identified core area, a more relaxed stance will be taken on the conversion of retail premises to residential uses. It is believed, that a mix of residential properties alongside retail properties in this location will help to support the remaining commercial premises and safeguard the viability of a smaller retail centre.

However, it is recognised that a number of conversions of ground floor shops to residential properties have already taken place in the local centre. Many of these conversions have been undertaken in a poor manner and have not had the desired outcome of improving the character of the area. Instead they have often resulted in a further detrimental impact upon the character of the area and the attractiveness of the remaining retail environment. Therefore, it is the aim of this SPG to also provide design guidance in relation to the conversion of shops to residential properties, for those areas outside of the retail core.

The first section of the guidance identifies the proposed retail core for the local centre.

The second section relates to shopfront design, it offers advice on general design principles, and provides a clear indication of the Council's expectations for the design quality for new or replacement shopfronts within the Upper Holton Road area. A section relating to design criteria for advertisements then follows.

The final section meanwhile, discusses the Local Planning Authority's stance on the conversion of commercial premises to residential uses and provides information on how this may be successfully undertaken.

It is important to note that the design guidelines are not meant to limit innovative design but are intended to provide a sound framework and information base from which good design can emerge.

National Guidance

National planning guidance is contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 4, February 2011) and associated Technical Advice Notes.

The Welsh Government is committed to achieving good design in all development at every scale throughout Wales. Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note (TAN) 12 'Design' (2009) encourages good design and gives more detailed advice on how this may be facilitated within the planning system. In considering applications for development, the Council will take account of the guidance contained within PPW and TAN 12 and seek to ensure that the nature, form and scale of proposed developments take into account the defining characteristics of its local context.

With regards to the composition of uses within town centres, paragraph 10.2.4 of PPW states:

"Although retailing should continue to underpin town, district, local and village centres it is only one of the factors which contribute towards their well-being".

Meanwhile, paragraph 10.3.17 states:

"Where vacant offices and retail premises in existing shopping centres seem unlikely to be used again for these purposes, authorities should encourage conversion to other appropriate uses".

Further national planning guidance which is relevant to the information contained within this SPG can be found in TAN 4 'Retailing and Town Centres' (1996) and TAN 7 'Out Door Advertisement Control' (1996).

The Adopted Unitary Development Plan

The Vale of Glamorgan Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was adopted by the Council on the 18th April 2005 and sets out the Council's policies and proposals for the use of land in the Vale of Glamorgan until 2011.

A core aim of the UDP is the protection and enhancement of existing retail areas within the Vale of Glamorgan. Strategic Policy 9 of the UDP requires that:

THE VITALITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF EXISTING TOWN DISTRICT AND VILLAGE SHOPPING FACILITIES WILL BE PROTECTED AND ENHANCED.

It is the aim of this guidance to protect the vitality and attractiveness of the Upper Holton Road retail centre. This will be promoted through ensuring better design standards in the area. Additionally the consistently high vacancy rates that currently detract from the area will be addressed by supporting alternative residential uses for these sites, where they can appropriately be converted.

Part II of the UDP contains detailed policies that provide the means of securing well designed developments that respect their local context. The following general policies are all relevant to the Upper Holton Road retail centre and should be read in conjunction with the guidance contained within this document:

UDP Policy ENV 27 (Design of New Development) encourages the consideration of good design to enhance the built and natural environment. It states that new development proposals 'must have full regard to the context of the local, natural and built environment and its special features'

UDP Policy ENV 28 requires that all new developments provide suitable access for customers, visitors or employees with mobility difficulties.

UDP Policy HOUS 2 (Additional Residential Development) identifies the areas in which additional residential development will be permitted

(subject to the criteria contained within UDP Policy HOUS 8) this includes the urban settlement of Barry.

UDP Policy HOUS 8 (Residential Development Criteria) establishes the criteria by which any new residential development will be assessed. Notably the scale, form and character of any proposed development must be sympathetic to the surrounding area; there must not be an unacceptable affect upon the amenity or character of the neighbouring environment and the provision of car parking and amenity space must be in accordance with the Council's approved guidelines.

UDP Policy TRAN 10 (Parking) requires that the provision of parking facilities should be in accordance with the Council's approved parking guidelines and will be related to a development's use, location and accessibility.

Finally, UDP Policy SHOP 9 'Protection of Retail Uses' seeks to protect the retention of Class A1 Uses in local and neighbourhood centres. However, as previously highlighted, given the long term general lack of commercial interest in this area the Council will consider alternatives to retail and commercial uses.

In accordance with the principles contained within these policies, this document provides additional guidance on the design standards that the Council will be seeking for any new shopfront or advertisement developments within Upper Holton Road, as well as further criteria by which to assess proposed conversions of commercial properties to residential uses.

Local Development Plan

It should be noted that the Vale of Glamorgan Council is currently producing its Local Development Plan (LDP), which will set out how land within the Vale is used between 2011 and 2026 and will supersede the UDP. The deposit LDP went out for public consultation between 20th

February and 2nd April 2012. The Council has recently considered its options in respect of the LDP and has resolved on 19th November, 2012 (Cabinet minutes C1902) to progress work on a replacement Deposit Plan which will be reported to a future Cabinet Meeting and Council during 2013. A further public consultation exercise will be undertaken on a replacement Deposit Plan in the Autumn of 2013. Subsequently a report will be presented to Cabinet on the representation received to the replacement Deposit LDP consultation documents and any subsequent consultation necessary under the process.

The LDP will then go to the Welsh Government where an Inspector will be appointed to conduct an Examination into the soundness of the Plan. The Inspector will then produce a report on the Plan which the Council must implement. The Plan will then be formally adopted by the Council and made widely available.

Up-to-date information on the progress of the Council's LDP can be found at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

The Guidance

Retail Core

Map 1, in Appendix 1, shows the properties which fall within the retail core. They are the properties within the block between Lower Guthrie Street and Jewel Street on the south side of Holton Road (254-280 even only), the block of properties between Burlington Street and Robert Street on the south side of Holton Road (282-300 even only), as well as the Tadross Hotel and 40 Burlington Street.

This area has been selected for the retail core on the basis, that within the local centre, it contains the largest existing cluster of primarily retail properties. In addition, a number of the units that are not currently retail uses are other commercial uses that support the retail function of this area. Furthermore, geographically this area is located sufficiently away from the Barry Major District Centre to ensure that it would act as a distinctively separate retail centre.

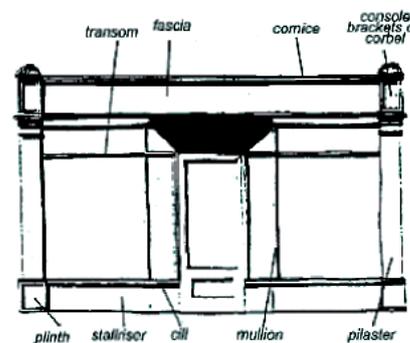
Within the core retail area the Local Planning Authority will seek to maintain levels of retail provision in order that the area sustains a viable retail function. Proposals therefore which reduce the levels of A1 uses within this retail core (at ground floor level) to below 50% will not be permitted.

Outside of the retail core, the Local Planning Authority will favour proposals for the conversion of retail premises to residential, provided that they meet the necessary standards of design for conversions as outlined later in this guidance.

It should be noted that existing retail and commercial properties outside of the identified core retail area will be able to continue to function as commercial properties. Although there will be a greater opportunity for these properties to convert to residential uses, there will be no obligation for these properties to do so.

Shopfronts: The Traditional Approach

The standard form for shopfronts is based upon classical precedents and has remained essentially unchanged since the 1700s. The shop front acts like a picture frame which contains the signage, detailing and displays and relates to the whole building frontage. Its elements are shown in the adjacent image.



Fascia

The fascia is the area where the shop's name is located. The scale of the fascia should be in proportion to the design of the shopfront and the length of the building as a whole. Traditional shopfronts were often canted (or tilted) forwards and contained within the console brackets.

Cornice

This is a moulding which crowns or finishes the shopfront and provides a horizontal division between the shopfront and the upper floors of the building. Traditionally the cornice is a timber construction.

Mullion

This is a vertical element that separates (and often supports) windows, doors or panels in a shopfront.

Transom

This is a horizontal bar, traditionally of timber, across the shopfront window. It can also separate a door from the fanlight above it.

Shop windows

The size and style of windows, glazing bars, mullions and transoms should be in scale and proportion with the rest of the shopfront and the building as a whole. The number, location and dividing up of any glazed areas must relate to the upper floors and any adjoining buildings.

Stall riser

This provides a solid base for the shopfront and protects the shop window and the bottom element of the shopfront from damage as well as acting as a screen for unattractive floor areas from public view. It also helps to provide a horizontal link to adjoining buildings.

Pilaster

Located either side of the stall riser are the pilasters, which are flat or decorated columns which define the width of the shopfront and enclose the window frame.

Plinth

This is a square or rectangular block which normally is located at the base of the pilaster.

Console or Corbel

Traditionally located at the head of the pilasters are plain or decorated console brackets, or corbels, which support any overhanging fascia.

Principles for shopfront design

Shopfront design can comprise of a wide range of styles and details, but specific basic rules apply everywhere. The key principles of shopfront design are:

- Shopfronts should work toward enhancing the overall quality of a streetscene
- A shopfront whether traditional or contemporary in design should not be designed in isolation, instead it should consider the scale, height and architectural composition of the whole building and its neighbours
- Shopfronts should create the impression that they're the base of the building above and not placed upon it
- Where the building form creates a surround, shopfronts should be designed to sit within it and not to extend over it
- Pilasters and other important architectural details provide visual interest and should be maintained and enhanced
- Where possible, a degree of physical separation should be maintained between neighbouring shopfronts; this includes where shops operate from more than one adjacent unit (in order to maintain the integrity of the individual buildings)
- Signage and security measures should be integrated into shopfront design at an early stage and should not exceed what is reasonably necessary to advertise the business or give protection against burglary and vandalism
- External illumination rather than internally illuminated box signs should be favoured

Design criteria for alterations or replacement of shopfronts

Upper Holton Road comprises primarily of late Victorian properties, many of which were originally built as shops. Unfortunately, the latter part of the twentieth century's contribution to the retail scene in this part of the town centre has been to largely detract from the high-quality of building work undertaken in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. This deterioration of the area can predominantly be linked to a general economic decline as well as changing retail patterns.

In common with many places that have experienced financial hardship in the last decades of the twentieth century, a tendency to undertake cheaper, low quality, works has developed in this locality. However, making do with poorer quality works, minor alterations and quick-fix solutions has left a legacy of shopfronts which impart a neglected feel to Upper Holton Road.

It is well recognised that good quality makes economic sense in all aspects of design. In this instance, a high quality environment leads to a feeling of pride amongst shopkeepers and residents. Enhancing the shopfronts in this location would contribute greatly to the overall surrounding environment which in turn is likely to increase the viability of individual shops.

It has been identified that the area suffers significantly from a large number of poor quality, neglected properties. Nevertheless, some properties still display traditional architectural details, whilst there remains a unity of original design across the upper floors of individual blocks of buildings. Therefore, a common approach to shopfront design would be beneficial.

New shopfronts within this part of Holton Road may not necessarily always need to be imitations of traditional designs, but the Council will seek to only give sympathetic consideration to alter or provide new shopfronts, if they comply with the design criteria contained within this guidance.

Materials and details

Materials chosen should harmonise with the building above and where suitable, with neighbouring buildings. Generally, the number of materials used to finish the shop front should be kept to a minimum, in order to avoid a clash with the adjoining buildings and the character of the street.

Timber is the traditional and preferable material for shop fronts. Timber is a versatile and durable material, which makes it an attractive and cost-effective option for use on traditional and contemporary shop fronts. Timber is capable of being finely detailed, moulded to different profiles, and by simple repainting, can be revitalised or altered in image, without detriment to the character of the whole building. Meanwhile, if it is regularly maintained timber can have a long life, and avoids the rapidly dating look of many (supposedly more modern) finishes.

Aluminium is a more modern, low maintenance alternative. Aluminium is a non-traditional shopfront material that can come in a variety of powder-coated finishes which may be acceptable. However, natural or anodised aluminium weathers badly and is not acceptable for new or replacement shopfronts. Likewise, plastics are generally not appropriate on older buildings. Although some plastic shopfronts may already be in place within Upper Holton Road, any new or replacement shop fronts within the area should avoid the use of plastic materials.

Further alternative materials may well be acceptable for non-traditional shopfronts provided they remain well designed and appropriate to the building and its locality.

The colour of a shop front is a detail that significantly affects the visual appearance of a shopfront and can impact considerably on the wider streetscene. Colour can be used to emphasise important elements of the design or to reinforce certain aspects such as mouldings and other lettering, however, generally the number of colours used within a single scheme should be kept to a minimum. Additionally, shiny reflective material finishes or garish colouring should be avoided.

Fascia

The fascia is a visual break between the shop window and the upper floors of a building. Fascias need to be well designed elements of the shopfront because their function is to advertise. An ugly fascia which is eye catching can give a bad impression of the entire shopping street.

Modern boxed fascias, which project forward of the face of the building, are deemed inappropriate as they are often bulky and detract from the appearance of the shop-front. Fascias should instead be set within the shop front and its frame rather than give the impression that they have been placed on top of it as a later addition.



The left hand building has a better scaled fascia

The depth of the fascia in general should be no deeper than 20% of the shopfront's overall height. The highest point of the fascia should not exceed the floor level of the first storey above. The fascia should also not impinge on other architectural details of the shopfront.

Where a store occupies more than one adjacent unit, each should have a separate fascia, linked visually by a common design. A single continuous fascia would be visually over dominant and would reduce the integrity of the individual buildings.



Continuous fascia ignores individuality of the buildings and disrupts the rhythm of the street

Stall risers

There will rarely be any situation where a stall riser is not required to complete the design of a shopfront. Stall risers are often an integral design feature, providing the shopfront with balanced proportions, support for the glazing and creating a solid visual base for the building. They should therefore be a strong feature both in dimensions and structure. Where stall risers are present, they should be retained, and where they have been removed they should be replaced.

Access

Access to any publicly accessible buildings has to be given special consideration, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995. Every opportunity must be taken to ensure that access to and circulation within a building is possible for all members of the public.

All designs should conform to current standards of the Building Regulations where applicable. Further details are available from our Building Control Department.

Blinds & canopies

Canopies and blinds can introduce colour to the street scene, and give shelter to pedestrians. Provided that they are attractively designed, the rhythm of blinds along a street can also add to its character. However, it is important that they are appropriate for both the individual building that they are to be erected upon and the character of the surrounding locality. Therefore, the merits of introducing blinds or canopies to commercial properties within this area of Holton Road will be carefully considered for each individual building. In considering whether or not canopies or blinds are suitable, the following guidelines will apply:



Appropriately designed blinds can provide an attractive addition to the streetscene

- Canopies should be fitted below first floor level and generally below the fascia level
- 'Dutch' blinds and plastic blinds are not appropriate and should be avoided. The visual impact, poor weathering and, often, the advertising on 'wet look' plastic blinds makes them a poor alternative to traditional blinds
- Canopies should be fully retractable
- The blind box should be designed into the shopfront and hidden from view
- A canopy's colour should be consistent with overall shopfront colour theme
- Canopies should not be fitted across pilasters or shopfront surrounds

Shopfront security

Ideally all security measures should be considered in full during the initial design stage of a development to ensure that the attractiveness and vitality of the streetscene are preserved or enhanced. The importance of security for business premises is recognised by the Council. However, a balance is required between addressing a shop's security issues and ensuring the attractiveness of buildings and the wider streetscene is not compromised. Furthermore, security measures should be integrated successfully within an overall design, irrespective of whether proposals relate to a new or existing shopfront.

Security shutter design

Planning permission will be required for all types of external security shutters and even if existing external security shutters are replaced with a different type of shutter, the external appearance of the premises will change and therefore planning permission will still be required. Subject to the design, internal only security shutters do not generally require planning permission.

It is important to note that planning permission will be refused for poorly designed shutters even if similar examples already exist in the locality.

Internal retractable grilles or perforated or lattice roller shutters that sit behind the shop window and are coated in a colour powder or plastic are the preferred option.

This type of shutter system provides a visible form of security measure that does not compromise the external appearance of the shop.



Example of internal security measures which protect the premises but ensures a positive image is still projected outside opening hours



External security shutters that are substantially perforated, slotted or the lattice type may be considered acceptable, provided they meet the following criteria:

- The shutter housing is concealed either internally or appropriately behind fascia
- Tracks are discrete
- Pilasters, cornices, fascias and other features of the shop front remain visible

The closed, also referred to as 'solid' type shutter, will not be considered acceptable. This is because when the shutters are rolled down, they have a number of detrimental impacts:

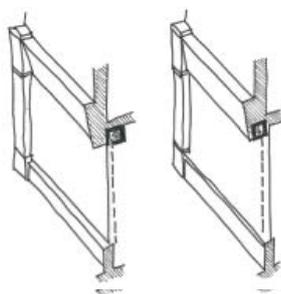
- Obscure features of the building
- Create dead frontage and an oppressive environment
- Are more prone to being vandalised and attract graffiti
- Prevent intruders from being seen
- Hide window displays



Above highly perforated shutters offer security and still allow views of the shops window displays may be considered acceptable.



Unacceptable solid security shutters



*Acceptable forms of shutter housing.
Left: internal shutter box, shutter inside shop window (preferred option).
Right: Shutter box located behind fascia, external shutter*

Shutter housing

Boxes housing the shutter mechanism will not be permitted where they project in front of the shop front, as they are inherently unattractive. Instead the shutter housing should be located internally within the shop or recessed behind the fascia area in order to allow the fascia board to sit flush with the shopfront.

Advertisements

External advertising is important for commercial activity and can come in a variety of forms. Well designed advertisements displayed upon buildings can enhance the overall appearance of a shopping area. Likewise, ill conceived, overlarge, poor sited or overly brash advertising can detract from the property and/or the area in which the shop is located. As such, a balance between satisfying the commercial needs of advertising and protecting amenity and the character of the surrounding area is required.

Fascia signs

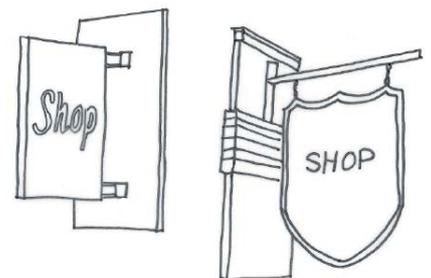
Well-designed fascia signs can add decorative interest and project an image of quality, confidence and permanence to a retail area. However, if they're poorly designed they create visual clutter and present an unattractive appearance.

The content of the fascia signs should be kept to a minimum. Generally they should display the name and number of the shop, whilst other details such as a graphic, the type of trade and a telephone number may also be suitable.

The lettering and graphics on the sign should be moderately sized and in proportion to the dimensions of the fascia, whilst garish colours should be avoided. The text should be clear, simple and readable and therefore styles should not be mixed.

Projecting & hanging signs

Well-designed projecting signs can enliven the streetscene at the same time as providing additional advertising. They should be positioned at or below fascia level allowing at least 2.1 metres in between the pavement and the lowest edge.



*Left: projecting plate sign
Right: hanging bracket sign*

Projecting signs should be limited to one per shop and are usually best used close to pilasters emphasising the division of shop units.

Generally projecting box signs are deemed inappropriate. Hanging bracket signs and projecting plates provide a far more attractive and elegant form of advertising.

Signs on windows & doors

Care should be taken to keep the number of signs on window and door areas to a minimum. Excessive window stickers and poster displays will detract from the shopfront by imparting a cluttered appearance and should therefore be avoided.



Excessive advertisements can result in a cluttered appearance.

Illumination

Illumination of advertisements on shopfronts should be limited to the fascia sign and where appropriate a single projecting or hanging sign.

It is preferable to illuminate fascia signs 'externally' rather than use internally illuminated plastic boxes which often detract from the appearance of a shop due to their depth and materials.



Discrete external illuminations

Trough lights with a hood finish to match the background colour of the fascia are the most appropriate form of external lighting. Spotlights or swan-neck lights are generally also appropriate. Where external lighting is proposed, it should still remain discrete and minimal.



Another, attractive alternative is 'halo lit' signs. These comprise of individual letters which stand proud of a surface and are lit from behind to produce a halo effect.

If internal illumination of a fascia is proposed, it should be confined to backlighting for letters and symbols only. This would involve translucent plastic letters or graphics being inserted into an opaque panel, which is illuminated from behind. In this instance, the light box would need to be fully recessed behind the fascia. Advertisements containing large expanses of bright, internally illuminated panelling will not be considered acceptable as they tend to be extremely harsh in appearance, and are often overly dominant within the streetscene.

If it is deemed necessary to illuminate projecting or hanging signs, they should be illuminated by external spotlights. However the fixtures and fittings for external illumination should be carefully integrated or concealed in the shopfront.

The Council will not permit the illumination of signs where this cannot be achieved in an appropriate manner.



Above example of Halo lighting – letters are raised and lit from behind



Fascia with text backlighting



Illuminated box signs should be avoided

Conversion of commercial premises

The Council recognises that constantly changing commercial and economic climates have resulted in reduced commercial interest within Upper Holton Road. Therefore, a flexible approach to land uses within this area of the town centre needs to be taken. This approach is encouraged by Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, February 2011) which states “where vacant offices and retail premises in existing shopping centres seem unlikely to be used again for these purposes, authorities should encourage conversion to other appropriate uses”.

As such, outside of the identified retail core (see Map in Appendix 1) the Local Planning Authority will favour the conversion of commercial properties to residential, where it can be demonstrated that the external alterations to the facade of the building as a whole will enhance the overall quality of the property, adjacent properties and the wider streetscene.

Currently outside the retail core the character of the area is a mixture of both residential and commercial uses, including a number of A3 uses. It is the aim of this guidance to help facilitate a change in the character of the area to one which is predominantly residential. It is acknowledged that A3 uses in close proximity to residential uses often cause conflict in terms of residential amenity. Therefore whilst it is accepted that A3 uses already exist in the area, alongside residential properties, the further introduction of A3 uses is considered likely to cause a serious conflict with the aspirations of changing the area to a primarily residential location. Consequently new proposals for A3 uses are likely to be resisted.



The property above is an example of a high quality conversion from a ground floor retail use to a residential premises.

The ground floor has been sensitively converted, with the removal of the traditional shopfront. The replacement façade is successful as it has considered the proportions of the building as a whole and in particular the upper floor of the building, as well as the neighbouring terraced properties by replication the buildings vertical and horizontal architectural details, using good quality matching materials.

The below image is of a shop front on the corner opposite the above property.

This image indicates how the above property would have appeared prior to conversion.



It is recognised that many upper floors over shops and ground floor commercial uses are already in residential use. A change of use from a commercial to residential use, particularly at ground floor level will require a number of design considerations, particularly where the works include the removal of an existing shop front.

Whilst a number of conversions to residential use have already taken place within this area of Holton Road, it is recognised that they have not always resulted in an improvement to the surrounding built environment, which has in part further undermined the remaining retail function.

The successful conversion of shops into residential units requires careful thought and a considered approach if the change is not to further harm the appearance of the property concerned, adjacent properties and the wider area.

The following sections cover the main issues that should be considered when planning the conversion of commercial premises to a residential property. The key principles to consider for converting commercial premises within Upper Holton Road into resident property are:

- Visual impact of the conversion
- Access to other units
- Provision of amenity space
- Provision of parking

Visual impact of conversion

In seeking to convert the ground floor of a commercial property, it is essential that the area of shopfront is not considered in isolation. In this regard the appearance of the upper floors of the property must also be considered, together with the appearance of adjoining neighbouring properties.



The above properties have been poorly converted to residential uses, with little regard to replicating the proportions and architectural detailing found on the first and second floors and the use of non-matching materials.

Use of materials

The materials to be used for the conversion of the shopfront to a residential façade should match the materials of the floor above the shopfront. In some situations, it will not always be possible to closely match existing materials. Under these circumstances, it may be sensible to provide a clear visual distinction between the ground and first floor. However, the use of high quality materials is considered necessary in any conversion.

Appropriate windows

The replacement of a large shop window with smaller windows can damage the appearance of the property, particularly if the altered property is situated amongst shops which retain large display windows. The proportions, size and placement of new windows is a key factor in determining the success of any conversion scheme.

The windows, together with any surrounding architectural detailing at first and second floor levels should be used as a key reference point for any conversion. The shop front windows should be replaced with modified versions of the upper floor windows, using the same proportions and horizontal placement to ensure that the vertical rhythm of the building is retained together with the provision of architectural details such as brick quoins, window surrounds and soldier courses.

Removal of fascia sign

When a shop has been converted, a fascia sign will no longer be required and can either be integral or separate to the shopfront. There will however, be a need for some form of visual separation between the ground and first floors, to ensure a visual balance between the floors is maintained.

The removal of the fascia sign and its replacement by an area of brick in an attempt to match the exterior of the first floor may cause a problem as it can alter the architectural balance of ground and first floors. This is particularly noticeable if the shop window is replaced by a smaller window; typically leaving a large, expanse of wall between ground floor and first floor windows. The balance of the elevation is disturbed and the appearance of the building may suffer as a result.

A solution to this problem could be to instead insert a raised band of render or brickwork along the line of the former shopfront fascia, although careful consideration will need to be given to each individual property, depending upon their overall form.

Retaining evidence of original use

Features that make up the visual 'frame' of a shopfront (e.g. pilasters, consoles, fascia) are often part of the original building and may be much older than the shopfront within it. When converting a property which has original features such as pilasters and consoles, these features should be retained as evidence of original use. This is particularly the case if the former shop is part of a parade of shops where pilasters and consoles are present. Additionally, where it is evident that these features have existed but have been lost, it will be desirable to replicate them.



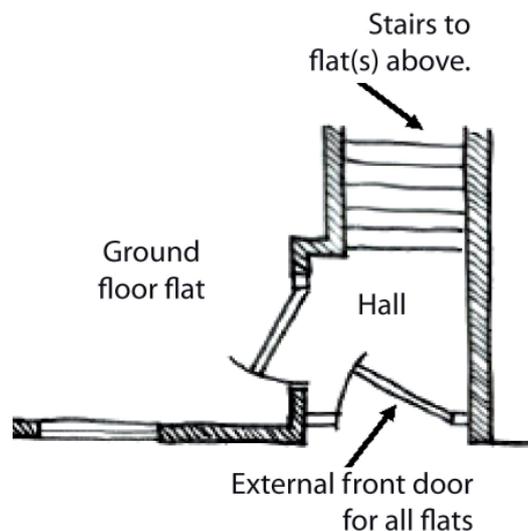
Example of a good conversion; the conversion has retained the shopfront surround but new windows and a door have been inserted which reflects the Victorian style of property.

Shops that were originally houses

Some of the shops within this area of Holton Road were originally built as houses, the ground floors of which were subsequently converted, and in some cases extended over the front garden. Some houses within the immediate area (e.g. part of the same terrace) have retained features, such as the original bay windows, which were lost at the time the property was converted. A conversion from a shop back to a residential unit could reinstate the original features, harmonising the property with its neighbours. The success of a scheme of this nature will depend significantly on selecting suitable materials and the quality of the workmanship.

Access to other units

In some instances the building that a shop is located within will be converted to form a single residential unit. In others the building may be converted to a number of residential units on different floors. Where there is more than one residential unit within a converted building, for security reasons, it is best to access all units from the street rather than from the rear of the building. However, where units on the ground floor are separate from those above, the inclusion of two or more front doors on a narrow frontage is unlikely to be visually satisfactory. This should be overcome by having a single front door for the whole property, with the individual units accessible through their own internal front doors, as indicated in the adjacent image.



Amenity space

In line with Policy ENV27 of the Vale of Glamorgan Council adopted Unitary Development Plan and 'Amenity Standards' SPG proposals for new residential developments will be required to provide useable, adequate, private amenity space.

The Council's adopted standards suggest that in self contained housing, developers should aim to provide a minimum of 1m² of the gross floor area of the dwelling. Whilst in flatted developments developers should aim to provide a minimum of 20m² amenity space per person (although this figure may be reduced as the number of residents intended to be accommodated increases).

Many of the properties on Holton Road are served by rear gardens of limited size and therefore it will often be difficult to provide the levels of amenity space generally required by the Council's 'Amenity Standards' SPG. However, there is scope for flexibility on the overall provision of amenity space for new development in Upper Holton Road,

particularly where the scheme includes enhancement to the facade of the building. It is also recognised that the original residential properties would have been served by limited amenity space in this town centre location. Furthermore, there are public open spaces located nearby and the opportunity to provide appropriately detailed conversions could allow for a significant positive impact upon the character of this area. Nevertheless, all new developments must ensure that direct access to the amenity space is provided for all of the proposed units within the building, and that there is sufficient outdoor space to carry out basic day to day needs such as refuse storage, clothes drying and to enable some degree of outdoor relaxation.

Further details on amenity standards can be found within the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Amenity Standards'.

Provision of parking

The Council has adopted parking standards in the form of South Wales Parking Guidelines (revised edition, 1993). These guidelines suggest minimum numbers of off street parking spaces be provided for new residential developments.

However, since these standards were adopted, national planning policy has argued against the need for minimum parking provisions. Planning Policy Wales (Edition 4, February 2011) states that "minimum parking standards are no longer appropriate and Local Planning Authorities should ensure lower levels of parking than that which have previously been achieved".

Due to the limited space available to the rear of the properties there is unlikely to be sufficient space to accommodate off road parking, as well as provide private outdoor amenity space. A flexible approach may also be taken to the provision of parking for new residential developments within this area, as the conversion of existing commercial premises into residential may well result in a reduced number of vehicle movements generated at the site. Additionally, the properties in this area are in a sustainable location, in close proximity to a range of facilities as well as transport networks; ensuring that car ownership is not essential for potential residents.

Planning permission

Planning permission is required for any alterations or changes that materially affect the appearance of a shopfront or any part of the external facade of a commercial building or building in a mixed use. Most alterations therefore require planning permission. For example, you would require consent for the following:

- Replacing the whole or part of a shopfront
- Inserting external security shutters or grilles
- Removing pilasters or stall risers
- Replacing existing windows
- Altering the size of windows
- Inserting a new door
- Erecting awnings or canopies

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list. Further advice on whether works will require the benefit of planning permission can be obtained from the Council's Development Control Department.

Advertisement consent

Fascia signs, blinds, awnings and other external features, such as 'A' boards and pavement signs, may require advertisement consent. Any illuminated sign will require advertisement consent.

Signs and advertisements are controlled by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisement) Regulations, 1992. Under certain circumstances advertisement consent will be required. The advertisement regulations are complicated, so it is advisable to seek advice from a planning officer if you are in any doubt.

Applying for Planning Permission

Application forms can be obtained from the Council offices, or may be downloaded via the Council's website at: <http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>

Applications may be submitted either in paper format or online.

The following information will be required when submitting an application (for paper submissions four copies of each will be required):

- Completed application form
- The correct fee
- Location plan (Scale 1:1250 with site outlined in red)
- Plans and elevational drawings (submitted at a metric scale of 1:50 or 1:100)
- Design and Access Statement

In addition to the above, there may also be a requirement to submit further supporting information depending on the circumstances.

Further information can be found on the Council's website or alternatively by contacting the Development Control Department.

Building Regulations

In addition to planning and advertisement consent, most alterations, installations of new shop fronts or changes of use (conversion of retail premises to residential use) will require Building Regulation approval under The Building Regulations 2000 (As Amended).

For further information the Council's Building Control Department can be contacted.

Further information

Further information and general advice on the submission of planning applications for the Upper Holton Road area can be obtained from:

Development Control

Dock Office

Barry Docks

Barry

CF63 4RT

Tel: 01446 704858

Email: planning&transport@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Advice and guidance relating to building regulations can be obtained from:

Building Control

Dock Office

Barry Docks

Barry

CF63 4RT

Tel: 01446 704842 / 704609

Email: buildingcontrol@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Appendix 1

Upper Holton Road Local Retail Centre, Barry



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Boundary of Upper Holton Road
Local Retail Centre



Retail Core

Appendix 2



7. Upper Holton Road District Centre



Introduction

- 7.1 This health check was originally undertaken in 2007 as part of the CIH Town Centre Living Study and this section represents an update of that part of the CIH report. The CIH study did not undertake a shopper survey in the centre due to the very low footfall and instead relied upon site visits and interviews with businesses in the centre. The findings and recommendations of this update are consistent with the CIH study representing an update only and not an alternative study.
- 7.2 There is only a limited range of shops and town centre uses in the Upper Holton Road shopping centre and for a district centre diversity is not good. There is not even a post office which TAN4 advises are typically found in the lower tier local centre. The choice of three convenience stores is however quite good for a small centre and overall the centre displays reasonable indicators of diversity for a local centre but not a district centre.
- 7.3 There has been very little investment in the shopping centre and many premises are very poorly maintained. Conversions to residential use have generally been of a very low quality. The potential capacity for growth is very limited due to lack of business support and consolidation around a retail core is a much more viable option.
- 7.4 The shopping centre environmental quality is very poor and there are a high number of vacancies throughout the centre. Many of the units that are still occupied have a tired and neglected appearance displaying a lack of care and investment. Conversions to residential use are generally of a very poor quality and many of the takeaways have shuttered windows adding to the oppressive environment during the day. There is also evidence of graffiti and vandalism throughout the centre.
- 7.5 Accessibility is fairly good for residents of the surrounding residential areas. However, there is no bus service along Holton Road and only an infrequent service at the eastern end. The parking restrictions vary in the shopping area but in much of the centre it is unrestricted and residents / business owners park all day discouraging passing trade that has also been reduced by the closure of Holton Road in the town centre.
- 7.6 Interviews with businesses located in the shopping area indicate high levels of dissatisfaction with the shopping centre. The main concern is the high level of vacancies, the limited range of shops and the high number of takeaways and it is a recommendation of this report that no more takeaways are permitted in any of the frontages on Upper Holton Road.

7.7 In summary, the shopping area presents very poor TAN4 indicators of vitality and viability and compares very unfavourably with competing centres and other district centres in the Vale.



The main strength is the three convenience stores and the few quality independents. The main weakness is the environmental quality, the limited range of shops and the high level of vacancies. The main opportunity is consolidation and the conversion of some blocks back to residential use. The main threat is continued neglect.

SWOT Analysis Strengths

- Good accessibility by foot, bicycle and car
- Proximity of town centre increasing passing trade / some combined trips
- Some specialist retailers that will attract passing and dedicated trade
- Three convenience stores
- Attractive buildings and parades
- Low rentals / property costs / overheads
- Linear centre with easy orientation
- Medical centre and school adding to diversity
- Good choice of takeaway foods that will attract passing and dedicated trade in the evening

Weaknesses

- No Post Office
- Dissipated retail offer making consolidation difficult
- No bank or free ATM
- High vacancy rate
- Shuttered takeaways during the daytime detracting from the streetscene
- Poor quality fascias detracting from otherwise attractive buildings
- Poor quality conversions to residential use
- Much evidence of urban decay / vandalism / neglect / under investment
- Infrequent bus service that only passes eastern end of shopping centre
- Unrestricted on-street parking spaces taken up by residents / business owners discouraging passing trade
- Closure of Holton Road in town centre has reduced passing traffic

Opportunities

- Management of on-street parking to encourage more passing trade
- Consolidation around a retail core
- Marketing of vacancies
- More proactive role for Council in regenerating the centre
- More frequent bus services
- Finding a role for rest of centre – specialist retail / residential / dining out destination
- Shop frontages / fascias / open shutters policy
- Improvement of surrounding residential areas

Threats

- Continued neglect and under investment
- Increased vacancies

Postscript

- 7.8 Since the CiH study was undertaken the medical centre which occupied two units has relocated to the Waterfront area increasing the number of vacancies in the centre. The only pharmacy in the centre will have suffered some loss of trade as a result of the location although the nearest pharmacy in the main town centre has closed so this may benefit the Pharmacy in Upper Holton Road.
- 7.9 There have been other changes in the centre since the CiH study including other new vacancies such as the former pet shop that was being used for storage by the neighbouring upholstery business. At the time of the CiH study there were no agents' boards in the centre and now there are four but it is unclear if this is a positive or negative indicator, hopefully it will bring much needed new investment into the centre. One of the quality independents the stained glass shop has left the centre to be replaced by a second tattoo parlour. There has been some positive investment in the centre such as Barry Tyre

Centre improving their two shop frontages on Holton Road. There is also a formerly vacant shop being fitted out to a high standard at the eastern end of the centre.

However, the new vacancies have probably had a negative effect on the overall vitality and viability of the centre.

Recommendations

- 7.10 The centre should be re-designated as a local centre.
- 7.11 The centre should be consolidated around a retail core where further non-retail development will not be permitted.
- 7.12 Outside the retail core the Council should encourage land use change so that the area becomes predominantly residential in character.
- 7.13 In consultation with the business community the Council should investigate the possibility of parking restrictions in the core retail area to discourage commuter and all day parking and encourage passing trade.





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