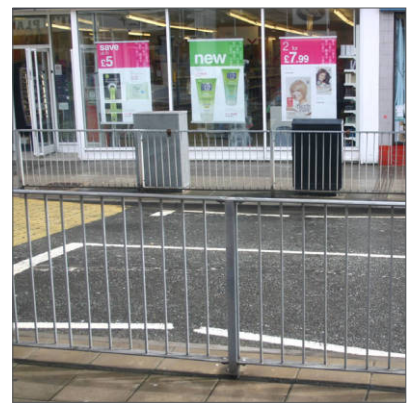


BLACKWOOD HIGH STREET: DESIGN BRIEFING NOTE

SEPTEMBER 12TH 2008



1.0 Who Are We?

We are consultants that have been appointed by Caerphilly County Borough Council. Our team includes a range of built environment disciplines and has worked on numerous public realm designs throughout Wales and the UK and studied street design throughout Europe.

2.0 What is our Brief?

We have been asked to prepare a Regeneration Strategy and Masterplan for Blackwood Town Centre. A key requirement of the brief was to re-design Blackwood High Street as part of the wider regeneration proposals. *The purpose of the briefing on the 12th September is to update you on the street design progress to date. We have previously agreed street design principles and goals with Officers, Councillors and the Clerk of the Town Council. We will use the Briefing to explain how these principles have been translated into an initial design for High Street.*

3.0 A Brief History of Street Design Policy

1900 - 1960: Pedestrians and vehicles share the spaces between buildings (the public realm).

1962: *Traffic in Towns* is published and calls for the separation of vehicles and people and shapes the way our streets are designed for the next 40 years. Professions which deal with streets also become separated. The pavement and public space is on one side of the schism (planning) and the management of vehicles in the carriageway is another (engineering).

1990 - 2000: Growing realisation that traffic management measures are damaging the appearance of our town centres. Simultaneous realisation that walking as a form of transport must be given greater priority.

2003: First phase of Kensington High Street is implemented. The scheme highlights the various benefits of creating a low speed traffic environment and giving pedestrians more priority. The street looks better, is easy to use for pedestrians and the severity and number of accidents reduce.

2005: *Highway Risk and Liability* is published which dispels the myth that non-standardised design results in greater risk of successful litigation.

2007: *Manual for Streets* published by Department for Transport (DfT). This is Policy Guidance stating need to prioritise for pedestrians and the need for design which reflects individual characteristics of places.

2008: DfT publish Local Transport Note as guidance for engineers to help them design with greater freedom. Heads of Valleys Authorities commission bespoke Street Design Guide to apply national policy and best practice to the unique characteristics of the Valleys.



4.0 Benefits of successful Street Design

- Reduced amount and severity of accidents
- Greater pedestrian comfort
- Increased highway capacity
- Lower noise
- Enhanced property values
- Distinctive image
- Lessons can be learned from other Authorities

5.0 Challenges of successful Street Design

- How the design considers Car Cruisers (a specific local issue)
- Careful consideration of people with impaired mobility is required
- A complex range of individuals and organisations with different agendas contribute to streets. All need to support shared goals
- Strong leadership is essential

6.0 Blackwood Street Design Goals

- Create a memorable sense of place
- Establish High Street as a design which sets the standard for the rest of Wales
- Create a street which can be used for different things at different times
- Make High Street more welcoming and accessible for pedestrians
- Celebrate the towns past and whilst providing the catalyst for the towns future

7.0 Blackwood Street Design Principles

- Accommodate people and vehicles, but design more for people
- Create a slow speed traffic environment without the need for humps, bumps and signals
- Adopt a minimal approach to signs, road markings and items like guard rails
- Celebrate key spaces in the town and make them stand out
- Include on-street parking and loading
- Create a comfortable streetscape for pedestrians (easy to cross the road, wide footways)
- Adopt a palette of materials that is specific to the locality (local stone etc)
- Incorporate trees and planting



Hennef in Germany has many similarities to Blackwood and is a very successful street



Kensington High Street is now more comfortable for pedestrians and cyclists



Studies show that "de-regulated" streets and spaces are at least as safe as the ones with a more conventional layout