



Whitehaven Town Centre Heritage and Design Series

This document is part of the Whitehaven Town Centre Heritage and Design Series. This series has prepared on behalf of Copeland Borough Council to ensure that all development proposals in, or adjacent to, Whitehaven town centre's conservation areas are well-considered, of high quality and have regard to their historical context.

This series is addressed to:

- Residents and businesses;
- The local community;
- Ward members;
- Council departments, including planning, land and property and highways;
- Potential public and private sector developers;
- Statutory service providers, and;
- Relevant professionals, including builders, architects and planners.

Documents in this series are:

- **Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas Character Appraisal**

This character appraisal identifies and explains the special historical and architectural character of Whitehaven town centre's conservation areas.

- **Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas Management Plan**

This management plan programmes short, medium and long-term actions to preserve and enhance the conservation areas.

- **Whitehaven Town Centre Development Guide**

This development guide outlines the urban design principles and criteria to be applied in the town centre.

- **Whitehaven Town Centre Site Development Guides:**

- Site 1: Former YMCA Building Irish Street
- Site 2: Albion Street South
- Site 3: Albion Street North
- Site 4: Quay Street Car Park
- Site 5: Bardywell Lane
- Site 6: Gough's Car Park, Strand Street/ Malborough Street
- Site 7: Mark House, the former Victorian public baths and the Paul Jones Pub, Strand Street
- Site 8: Former Bus Depot, Bransty Row
- Site 9: Former Bus Station and Works, Bransty Row

These site development guides are to be read in conjunction with the Whitehaven Town Centre Development Guide and indicate the degree and type of development that will be acceptable on each development site.

- **Whitehaven Town Centre Public Realm Appraisal**

This public realm appraisal provides guidance on the degree and type of surface materials and street structures that will be acceptable in the town centre.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to the people of Whitehaven who provided invaluable local knowledge and encouragement during the preparation of this report, in particular Cllr John Kane, Cllr Jeanette Williams, Cllr Henry Wormstrup, John Crewdson of the Whitehaven and District Civic Society, Michael Moon of the Whitehaven Heritage Action Group and Celia McKenzie of the Whitehaven Harbour Commission.

Thanks are also due to the staff at the Whitehaven Record Office and Local Studies Library who provided helpful assistance and to the Lowther Estate who kindly permitted the reproduction of several of the plans within this document.

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Introduction

The purpose of this Development Guide is to outline how the buildings, streets and places within Whitehaven can be conserved, improved and developed to enhance the special qualities of the Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas. Whitehaven is unique for the completeness of its eighteenth century townscape. The events in the town's history over the past 400 years have fundamentally shaped the Whitehaven we see today. The character of the town has been **strongly** influenced by the diversity of activities and functions that have occurred within its boundaries. It is recognised that an increasingly important component of the town's future prosperity lies in its rich townscape heritage. Whitehaven has moved on from its trading port and mining past to embrace a future that celebrates the town's unique character and coastal setting. It has become a place where people choose to live, work and visit. It is envisaged, and indeed hoped, that significant improvements to the built form within the town will happen in the years to come. Therefore, an understanding as to how the town was formed is needed in order to gain an appreciation of its special qualities and direct building owners and developers as to how these may be reinforced and improved.

This Development Guide is in three parts. Section 1 outlines the urban design principles to be adopted within the town centre. A summary of Whitehaven's historical background is given in Section 2. In Section 3 the existing built form is examined and guidance is given on the design criteria to be applied across the town centre.



Typical Whitehaven street

1.0 Urban Design Principles

Principles Promoted by this Guide

It is essential that changes to Whitehaven's town centre are well-considered and of high-quality. Developments involving alterations or change-of-use of existing buildings as well as new building proposals will require planning permission and, where relevant, Listed Building Consent. Conservation Area Consent will also be required where demolition of any existing buildings is proposed. The purpose of this Development Guide is to assist applicants to gain an appreciation of the town's character and convey the degree of development that would be appropriate.

The principles promoted by the Development Guide are as follows:

- To enhance the setting of the existing buildings and spaces;
- Ensure new developments sit comfortably within the established street pattern;
- To ensure new developments respect the scale and massing of neighbouring buildings;
- To exploit attractive views and vistas;
- To use materials and building methods that will last, age well and enhance the quality of neighbouring buildings;
- To encourage high quality modern developments;
- To discourage poor quality historical pastiche;
- To encourage mixed-usage and diversity;
- To provide attractive and active street frontages that maintain good natural surveillance;
- To clearly define and separate public and private space;

- To bring back into use under-occupied or vacant sites and buildings;
- To promote improvements to the public realm;
- To encourage high quality and sensitive repair of the existing built form;
- To reduce the negative visual impact of vehicles;
- To promote excellent design standards adjacent to important spaces or buildings;
- To achieve sustainable development;
- To promote a safe and easy-to-understand network of streets that provide good connectivity, permeability and accessibility, and;
- To encourage the integration of art and craft within the built form

Planning Consultation

Applicants seeking planning, Conservation Area or Listed Building consent are encouraged to follow these principles and take appropriate steps to ensure design proposals involving buildings in the town centre are of a high quality and appropriate for their setting. The following points should be noted by applicants:

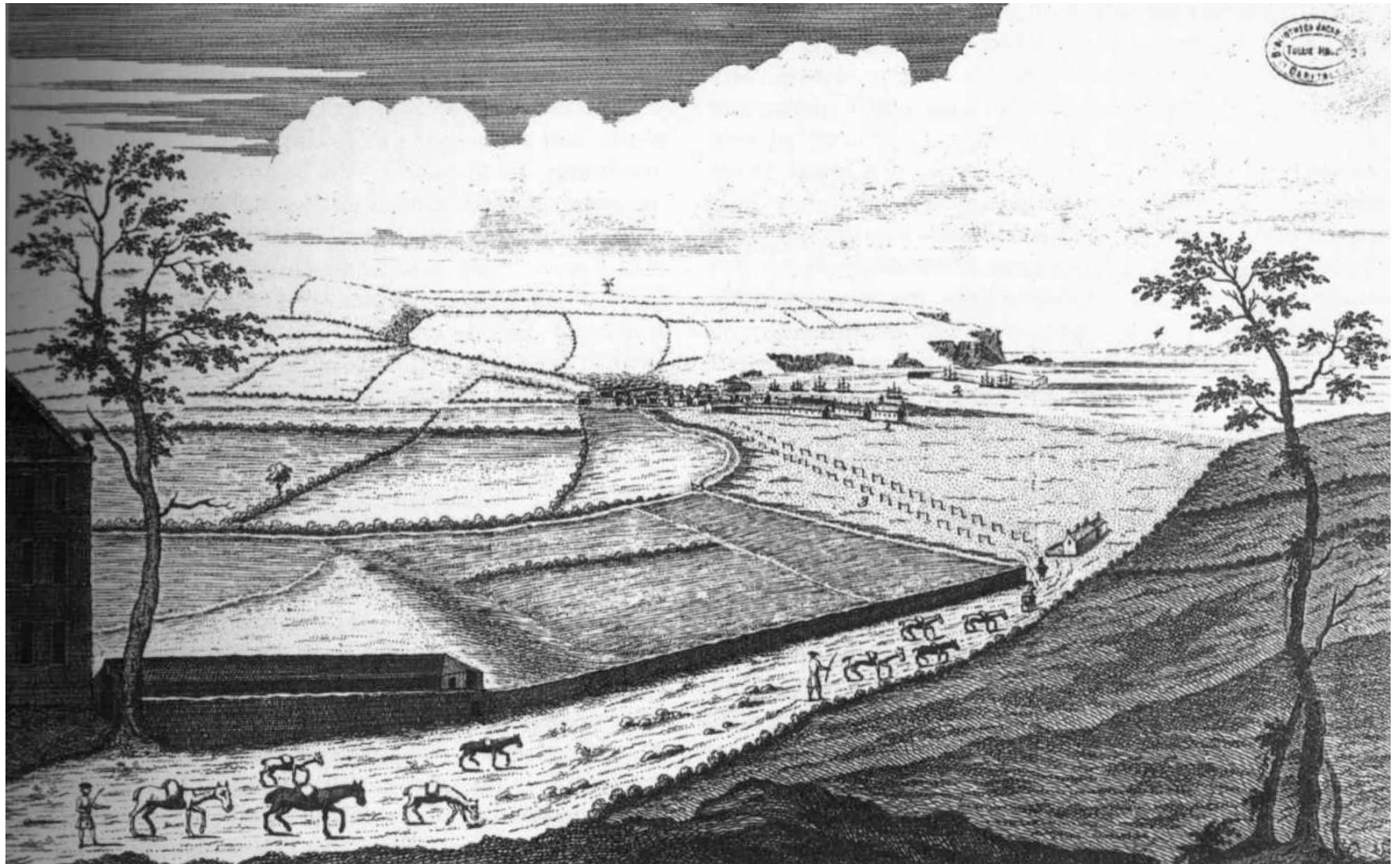
- It is important to understand the character of each conservation area;
- Applicants should define clearly the scope of their development and the proposed usage;
- The commissioning of an architect with a good track record of working in historic settings is encouraged, and;
- Applicants should consider how their proposals can enhance the town centre and bring added value.

During pre-application discussions with the Council, applicants should provide sufficient supporting information to allow full consideration of the proposals. This should include the following:

- An analysis of the proposed development site within the general context of the town centre;
- Photographs giving views at street level, distant views and aerial views;
- Contextual street elevations indicating the adjacent building frontages;
- A physical context model at an appropriate scale;
- Written justification in support of the development and the proposed usage, and;
- Precedent illustrations.

The following publications are suggested as good reference resources in connection with development in the town:

- *Urban Design Compendium and Compendium 2* (English Partnerships / Housing Corporation);
- *Building in Context* (English Heritage / CABE);
- *Car Parking – What Works Where* (English Partnerships);
- *Design and Access Statements – How to Write, Read and Use Them* (CABE), and;
- *By Design: Urban Design in the Planning System: Towards Better Practice* (CABE/ ODPM),



Whitehaven, 1642

2.0 Historical Background

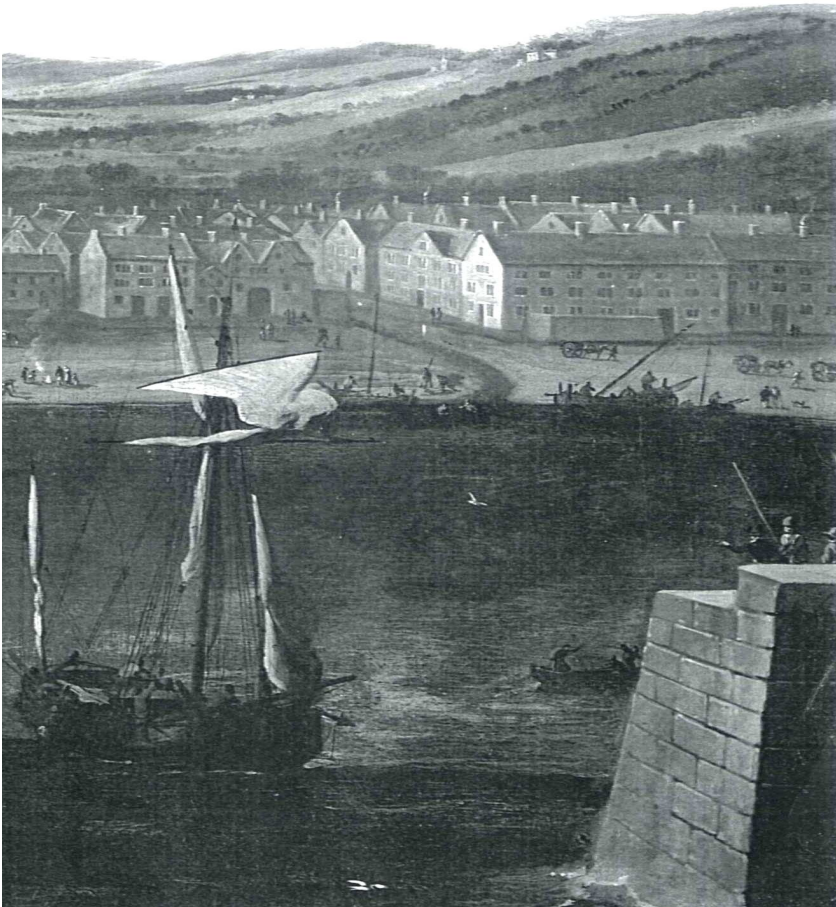
Introduction

Whitehaven is located on the Cumbrian coast approximately 10 miles west of the Lake District National Park and immediately north of St Bees Head, the principal headland between Morecambe Bay and the Solway Firth. The town is one of the earliest and most complete post-medieval planned towns in England. Before the middle of the seventeenth century, the town was little more than a small fishing village. However, over the following hundred years or so it was deliberately planned and developed as a port and substantial town by its landowners, the Lowther family. By 1740, thanks largely to trading in tobacco, coal and salt, Whitehaven had become the largest port in England outside London. The physical constraints of the surrounding hillsides determined the boundaries of the town centre. Rapid expansion meant that by the 1760s the street network and building frontages were in place, leaving the fundamental form of the town as we see it today.

Before the end of the eighteenth century the town was being supplanted by rival ports such as Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol. Whitehaven lost its importance as a trading port and was never to recapture the prominence it had enjoyed in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. This rapid growth and dramatic decline created a unique set of circumstances that combined to ensure the survival of one of England's most intact planned towns of the eighteenth century.

Early Settlement

Until 1630 and before the involvement of the Lowther family, Whitehaven was under the control of the Manor of St Bees. Containing between 40 and 50 tenements, the settlement was home to approximately 250 people. The village lay mainly on the southwestern side of Pow Beck (a stream on the line of Market Place) and was principally arranged along the axis of what is now Quay Street and Swingpump Lane. A second cluster of buildings approximately followed the lines of what is now Chapel Street and Roper Street and led to a small chapel which was located where Chapel Street now joins Lowther Street.



Whitehaven Harbour, 1686

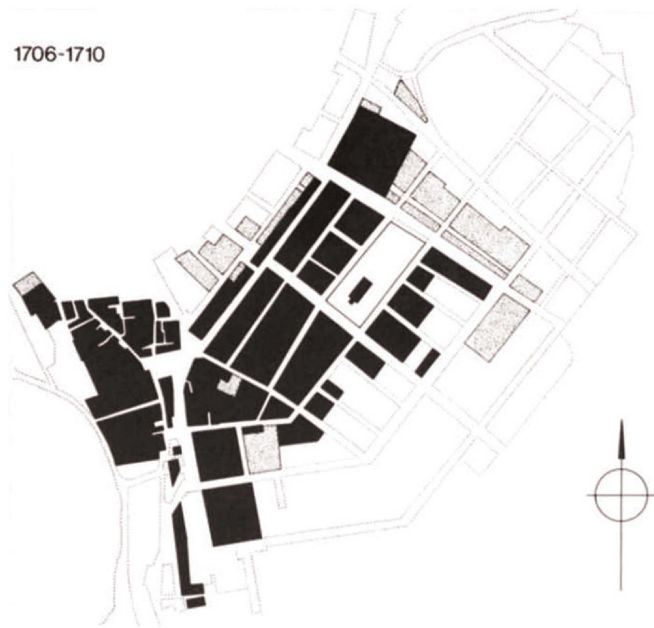
The Town's expansion between 1667 and 1755

Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, Thomas Wybergh, who was related to the Lowther family by marriage, acquired the Whitehaven estate from the Manor of St Bees in 1599. In the early 1600s, Wybergh conveyed half of the estate, including the ownership of the coal seams beneath the estate, to the Lowther family. In 1630, the estate was inherited by Sir John Lowther (1582 – 1637) who appointed his second son, Christopher (1611 – 1644), as estate steward and left him the estate upon his death in 1637. From then until the family line died out in the 1750s, the estate was owned by this junior branch of Carlisle's Lowther family and the town's rapid growth and development is largely attributable to the endeavors and initiatives of the three Lowther generations who owned the estate during this period. The evolution of the town's expansion between 1667 and 1755 is indicated here.

Following his inheritance from his father, Sir Christopher, who became a Baronet in 1642, began to export processed sea salt and locally mined coal by ship to Dublin and his estates in Ireland. At this time, Whitehaven's harbour was an open creek, inadequate for commercial craft. In 1634 Sir Christopher constructed a pier to provide shelter and to enable the harbour to accommodate his growing fleet of ships. This early pier is now incorporated into the Old Quay. The village itself began to expand during Sir Christopher's lifetime and although little is known about his intentions for the settlement it is arguable that the marking out of two approximately parallel streets during the early 1640s (Chapel Street by 1642 and King Street by



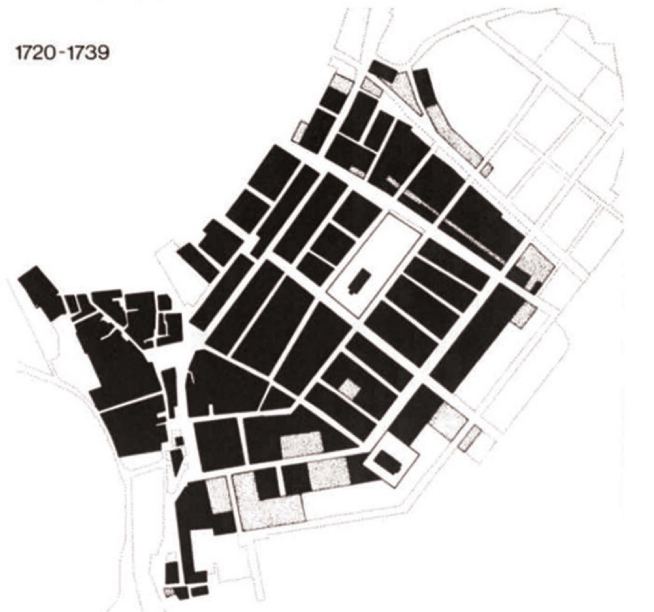
1706-1710



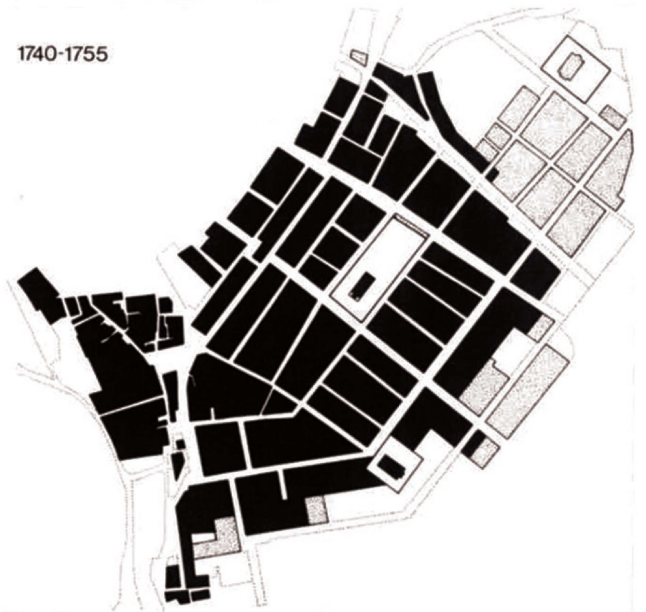
1711-1719



1720-1739



1740-1755



1645) makes Sir Christopher responsible for the early development of the town's planned pattern. Sir Christopher died prematurely at the age of 33 in 1644, and left the Whitehaven estate to his son Sir John (1642 – 1706) who was then under two years old. The estate was overseen by trustees until Sir John came of age in 1663. In 1656 the Trustees obtained a grant to hold a market and a fair in the town. This grant was formally confirmed in 1660 and led to the development of Market Place alongside Pow Beck.

Sir John Lowther's Vision

Like his father, Sir John continued to enlarge the settlement and export coal and salt to Ireland and even purchased land next to his estate to gain ownership of additional coal seams. However, Sir John's involvement with Whitehaven went far beyond securing prosperity and expansion of the town. He had a keen interest in town planning and was concerned with all aspects of the town's growth which included, for example, how the streets were laid out, the order and timing of development and the most appropriate locations for different uses.

Sir John systematically purchased all of the land within the town from private individuals. This enabled him to control how the town grew. He was able to plan the streets that he wished and to grant plots of land to builders and developers exactly where he wished the town to develop. However, unlike later planned settlements such as New Lanark in Scotland, Saltaire in West Yorkshire and Port Sunlight on the Wirral, Sir John encouraged others to develop buildings themselves rather than

build himself. He also did not seek to directly control architectural styles, although he did introduce a series of detailed building regulations which sought to obtain a certain architectural standard and design quality in new buildings. The first of these building regulations was introduced in 1699 and stipulated that new buildings had to be constructed at the front of building plots immediately adjacent to the street. Further regulations required buildings to be three storeys high and to be constructed in continuous rows with shared party walls.

Early Influences

Although the building regulations imposed by Sir John were by no means unique, they are considered to have been relatively detailed and advanced for their time. It is entirely plausible that Sir John was inspired by the rebuilding of London following the Great Fire of 1666 and that as such Whitehaven reflects Georgian metropolitan development and design philosophies, albeit adapted to suit the more provincial setting.

Development Begins

In 1664, Sir John was elected as a Member of Parliament but, despite spending a large amount of his time in London, he appears to have retained a close interest in the development of Whitehaven. He was greatly assisted by his agents in Whitehaven, first the Tickells and later the Gilpins who were responsible for the town's development in Sir John's absence. Between 1667 and 1685 Sir John purchased The Flatt, Whitehaven's mansion house, from Sir George Fletcher of Hutton. In 1685 he

first conceived the idea of creating a broad street through the centre of his estate. This street (now Lowther Street) was to lead between The Flatt (now Whitehaven Castle) and the harbour and be roughly parallel to Roper Street and Duke Street, which then existed as the route to Egremont.

Construction of this broad street commenced in 1687 following the demolition of the settlement's existing small chapel, which blocked the projected line of the street. A new church within its own square was erected on the site now occupied by the tower of St Nicholas' Church. The orientation of the new church was subject to significant debate. Lowther Street does not run due north-south but northwest-southeast and a church facing east, would have been at an angle to Sir John's street pattern. Sir John is believed to have consulted an architect from London who advised him that European churches often have little regard to an eastern orientation and as a consequence the new church was sited in conformity with the street line. Once Lowther Street and the new church were in place the framework of streets around the square, including Queen Street, College Street and New Street, followed in a sequential fashion.

The Plan for the Town

By 1696, four ropewalks had been created in the Brackentwaite area to the north of the town and these defined the later line of George Street. An estate plan c.1705 shows the extent the town had grown during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Population figures also illustrate the speed at which the town developed.

In 1667, Whitehaven contained approximately 85 dwellings, by 1685 this number had increased to 268 dwellings and the settlement was home to approximately 1,089 people.

Rejection of Sir John's Plans

Not all of Sir John's ambitious plans were realised. He had intended that the harbour-side should be reserved for warehouses and that grand houses be built on his Lowther Street. However, pressure

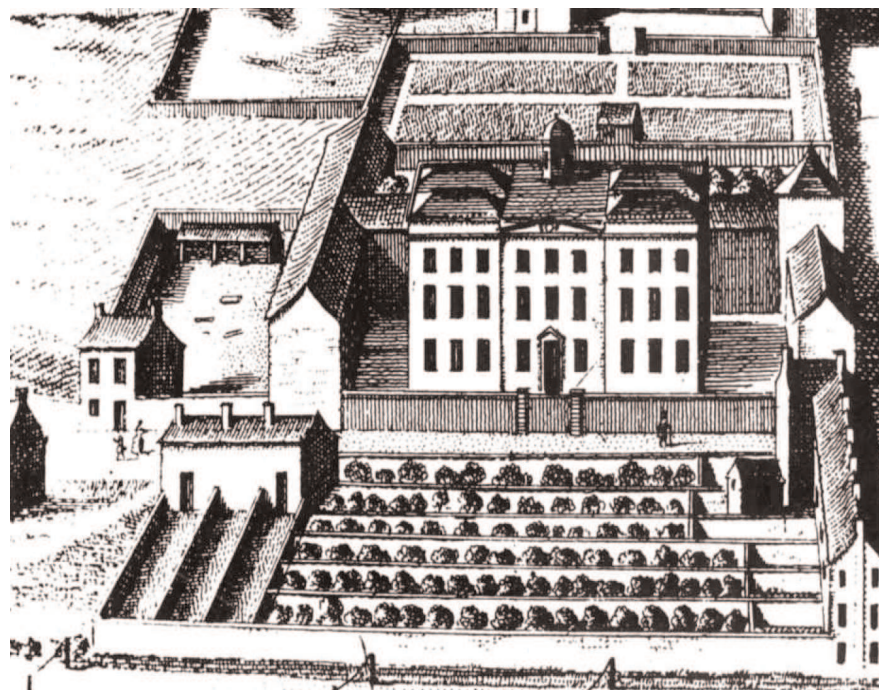
from the town's wealthy residents meant he later permitted shops, workshops and large houses to be constructed on East Strand (now Strand Street).

In 1697, Sir John's agent, William Gilpin, proposed the creation of a grand and fashionable square to the southwest of Lowther Street in the area between Queen Street and what later became Scotch Street. Despite Sir John's enthusiasm for the project the square was never created, possibly through a combination of entrenched local interests and a

more provincial outlook. Had Gilpin's proposal been realised, it would have been one of the earliest planned squares in the country. Notably, some of the town's wealthier inhabitants rejected Sir John's vision. After his death, some residents chose to build their houses on streets other than Lowther Street and in a fashion that did not conform to his building regulations. The Cupola Building on Duke Street (c.1715) is an example where Sir John's desire to have buildings built up to the street edge was clearly flouted.



Plan of Whitehaven, 1705



The Cupola, Duke Street- departing from Lowther's regulations



George Gale's House, Queen Street



Cellar Access

Connection with the New World

During the 1670's one of the town's sea captains sailed to Virginia in the 'New World' and returned with a cargo of tobacco. This led to the development of a thriving tobacco trade and by the 1740's Whitehaven had become the second largest tobacco importer in England. However, trade was brought to an abrupt end in the 1770s as the American War of Independence put a stop to importation. Today, few if any buildings survive to provide evidence of this once thriving trade as the large harbour-side warehouses used to store hundreds of hogheads of tobacco have been demolished.

In addition to providing immense wealth, the tobacco trade is also responsible for uniquely linking Whitehaven with the formative years of the United States of America. George Gale, one of the town's most prominent tobacco merchants, visited Virginia where he met and married Mildred Warner Washington, the widow of Lawrence Washington and mother of two young sons, Augustine and John. The family moved to Whitehaven in 1700 but Mildred died the following year and, following a dispute over her will, her two sons returned to Virginia. Mildred is buried in the churchyard of St Nicholas' Church along with her baby daughter and her African slave, Jane. In 1732 Augustine's wife gave birth to a baby boy, later to become George Washington, the first President of the United States of America.

After Sir John Lowther

Following Sir John's death in 1706, the Whitehaven estate was inherited by his second son Sir James (1673 – 1755). Sir James did not share his father's passion for town planning or aesthetics

and repealed many of his father's detailed building regulations, although the regulation for building in continuous rows was retained and a ruling which forbid the building of cellar steps on the street front was introduced in 1748.

Like his father, Sir James became a Baronet, inheriting the title in 1731 from his disinherited brother Christopher (1666 – 1731). He lived principally in London although was known to regularly visit Whitehaven. However, unlike his father, he did not take an active part in the town's trading or industrial enterprises nor did he strive to improve the town's amenities. Since his coal was exported by sea, Sir James had no incentive to improve land routes into the town and local roads were not turnpiked until local merchants acquired the required capital in the 1740s. Sir James did not seek to expand or improve upon his father's ideas for the town and instead permitted development that directly conflicted with Sir John's vision. As early as 1706 he allowed the creation of New Lowther Street and Marlborough Street, neither of which fitted precisely into the existing street pattern. In the 1720s, when the town was suffering from an economic recession, he permitted the erection of a shambles, or open-air slaughterhouse and meat market, at the southeastern end of Lowther Street - originally Sir John's grandest street. In 1742, to avoid liability for street repairs, he encouraged the northern side of the square around St Nicholas' Church to be developed and, as this development faced Duke Street, it conflicted with Sir John's regulation that buildings within this area should face towards the church.

However, despite Sir James' lack of passion for following through Sir John's plans, Whitehaven continued to grow along the lines laid down by his father as development appeared along Duke Street and Irish Street and extended along Lowther Street towards The Flatt. In 1696 the town's population had risen to 2,281 and had further increased to 2,972 in 1702. By 1713 the town's population was 4000. A second church was built between June 1714 and October 1715 at the eastern end of Roper Street to accommodate the town's ever growing population. Known initially as King George's Church and later as Holy Trinity the church was demolished in 1948. The site is now an attractive public garden, however in townscape terms, this must be seen as a loss given the contribution the building must have made to the termination of Roper Street. Following the development of the Brackentwaite area and High Street to the north of George Street a third church, this time dedicated to St James, was built in 1752-3 strategically placed at the elevated termination of Queen Street.

Harbour Expansion

The harbour also continued to develop at this time. In 1733-4, the town's Harbour Trustees built a new pier known as the Merchants Quay (or Sugar Tongue) off West Strand. Further improvements then followed. The harbour itself was deepened and the New Pier (or Old Quay) was constructed in 1740-3, the Old Quay was extended in 1753 and the New Tongue built in 1754.



Development on Duke Street / St Nicholas churchyard



Holy Trinity Church



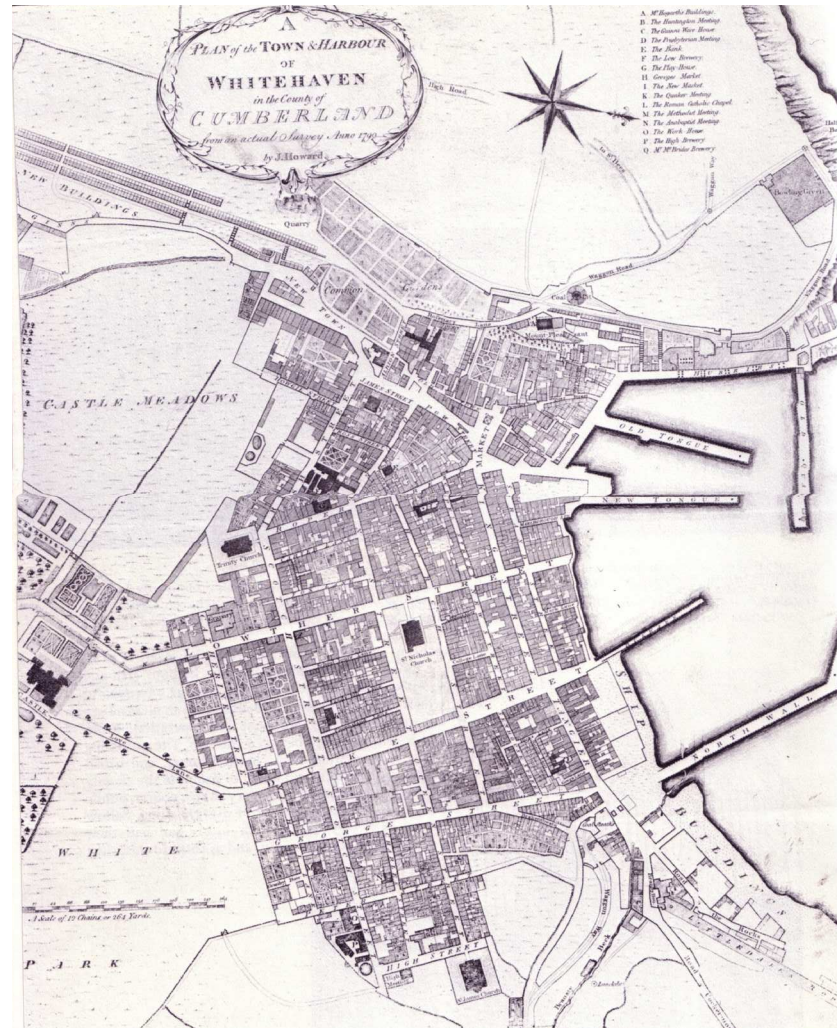
Back houses, Chapel Street

The End of the Town's Expansion

By the mid eighteenth century and the death of Sir James in 1755, all the main streets within the town centre had been laid out. The town had also reached the edge of its physical limits and was confined to the north by the hillside above St James Church, to the south by the hillside above Swingpump Lane, to the east by the grounds of The Flatt and to the west by the sea. Sir James died unmarried, without an heir. The estate was passed through a distant cousin to Sir James Lowther of Lowther (1736 – 1802). Sir James appears to have taken little interest in Whitehaven and the town's rapid expansion ground to a halt. However, whilst the town's perimeter remained constant, its population size did not and numbers continued to grow sharply until they peaked at approximately 16,000 in 1785. This led to a change in the town's density as new houses were built on any available space, often within courtyards to the rear of existing houses within previously spacious rear gardens (back houses). Existing houses were also subdivided and conditions within the town centre became cramped and overcrowded. A plan of the town dated 1794 indicates the dense nature of development.

Competition from other Ports

The American War of Independence in the 1770s, and the resultant bankruptcy of several of Whitehaven's leading tobacco merchants, was paralleled by the development and expansion of several of the town's rival ports. Towns such as Glasgow, Liverpool and Bristol lay on rivers or coasts where port facilities could be easily expanded. They had large and readily accessible



Plan of Whitehaven, 1794

local populations to export goods to and also had a significant manufacturing base. The remote geographical location and difficult topography of Whitehaven meant that the town had an inadequate and relatively shallow man-made harbour and a sparsely populated and inaccessible hinterland. The town became unable to compete with its rival ports and during the nineteenth century it entered a deep recession. Little development occurred during this recession and consequently, whilst other Georgian towns were substantially redeveloped during the nineteenth century, Whitehaven's centre remained largely untouched. Some development did occur at the town's periphery at this time however. After Sir William Lowther of Swillington (1757 – 1844) inherited the estate in 1802, new building land was made available and Wellington Row and the north-east side of High Street were developed in 1812 whilst Sea View followed in 1820.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, development within Whitehaven town centre was largely restricted to replacements or adaptations of earlier buildings, or groups of buildings, to provide new facilities. Stylistically, these buildings were diverse and tended to follow the various architectural styles that prevailed at the time, however in general, these buildings kept to the basic rules of the town plan. A number of these buildings are of exceptional quality.

The Coal Industry

For much of the twentieth century coal mining played an important part in the fortunes of the town. A network of railway sidings connected Bransty Station

to the north, with Preston Street Goods Station to the south. The tracks ran along the harbour front and quaysides. A single trolley route ran from the harbour to Preston Street Goods Station, via Market Place. To the west of the town, Duke Pit and Wellington Pit created a significant grouping of mining structures, perched on the hillside. Much of this has since been demolished and only remnants of the industrial heritage remain today. Haig Pit, to the south of the town, was the last of Whitehaven's coal mines and it eventually closed in 1986.

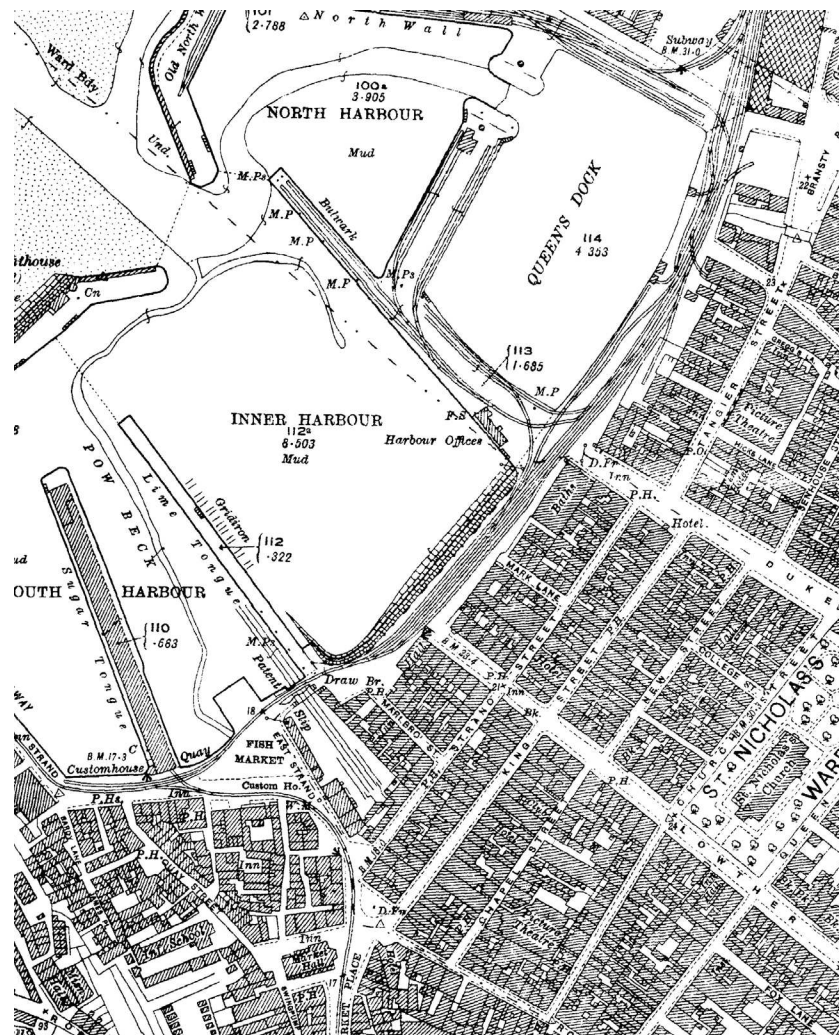
The Harbour's Role

In the twentieth century the harbour served the wide range of industrial processes based in and around the town. A series of ad hoc structures were erected along the harbour front, such as silo's and warehouses. The negative amenity created by these industrial processes separated the harbour from the town, with Strand Street acting as the division line.

Recent Developments

From the 1950s onwards, a series of initiatives were instigated to improve housing conditions within the town. This led to many of the 'back houses' within courtyards being cleared and the refurbishment of retained properties. However, a small collection of courts do still remain and these give a useful insight into Whitehaven's past.

Development within the town in the latter part of the twentieth century included retail, residential and civic buildings. The Civic Hall was subject of an



Railway sidings to the harbour, 1900



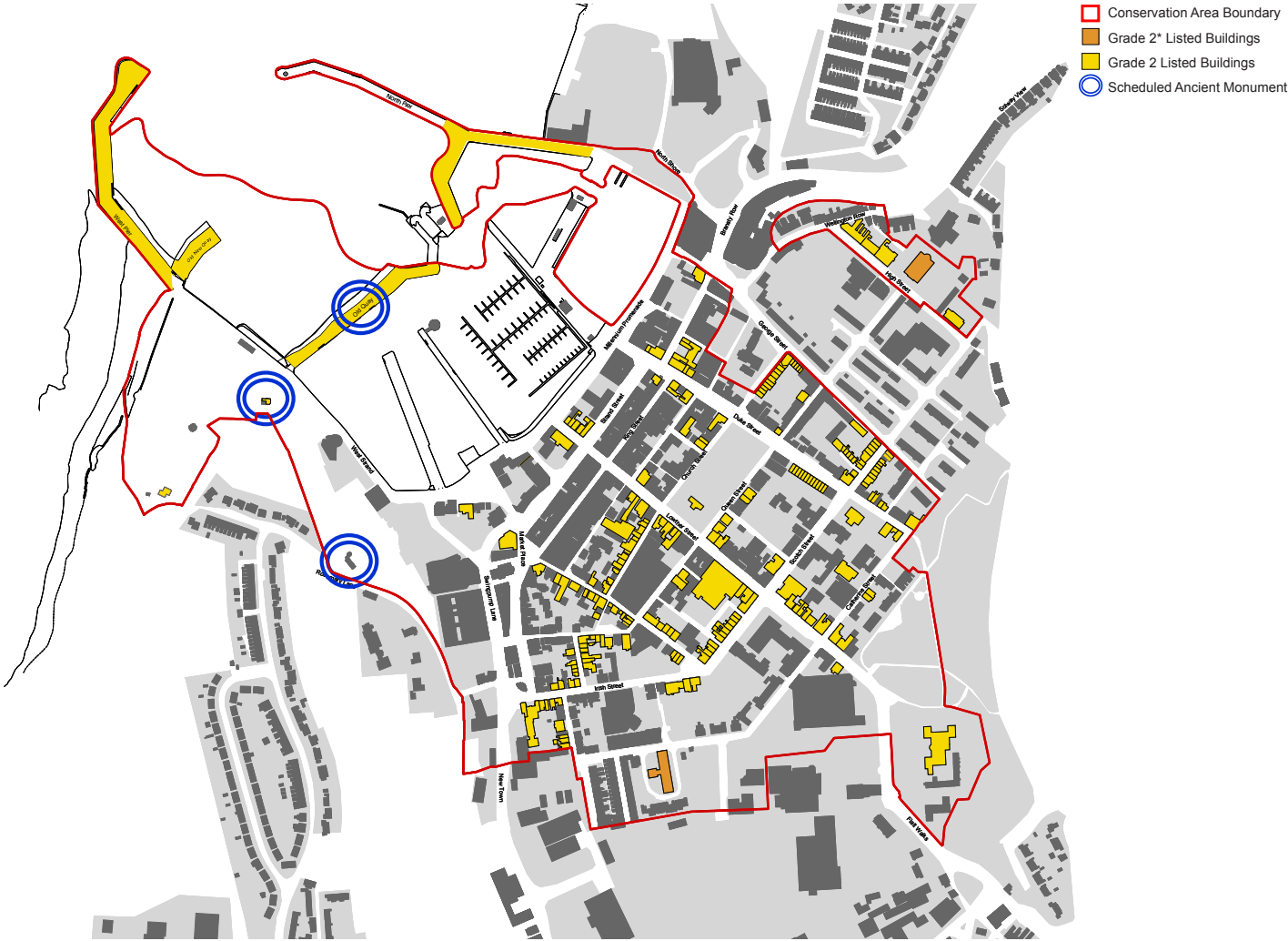
Whitehaven Harbour, 1960



Courtyard off Queen Street

architectural competition in 1969. The multi-storey car park on Swingpump Lane was completed in 1973. To the south of the town centre, the Sports Centre, Morrison's Supermarket and the recent Copeland Centre have all recently been built. Whilst fulfilling important roles to the functions of the town, the introduction of these buildings and associated surface car parking has somewhat dissipated the cohesiveness of the eighteenth century town layout.

The majority of the town is within one of two conservation areas, namely Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street. Within these Conservation areas are located a collection of Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Grade II and II* listed buildings.



Plan showing listed buildings



19/20 Irish Street

The harbour was redeveloped in 2000 to become a marina for leisure craft. This transformation has created an attractive asset to the town and its visitors. The improvements to the harbour now highlight the historical separation of this area from the town. It is potentially here where redevelopment has the greatest part to play in the regeneration of



The harbour, from the harbour view

3.0 Built Form

Built form is the physical expression of buildings and spaces that define the character of a place. The relationships, shape and size of buildings, structures and spaces within Whitehaven's town centre all potentially influence the users' activity and movement and consequently are fundamental to the success or otherwise of the town centre. It is important these issues are taken into account when improvements or development in the town centre is being considered.

The Development Guide does not deal with individual sites and the responsibility remains with the applicant to carry out their own research and analysis specific to the location of their proposal. The information provided here should, however, inform this process and enable an appreciation of the town's built form to enrich future proposals.

The aspects of the built form covered in the Development Guide are as follows:

Urban Grain

- The nature and extent of the subdivision of the area into smaller development parcels that define the pattern and scale of streets, blocks and plots and the rhythm of building frontages along the street.

Density and Mix

- The extent of developed land and the range of uses.
- The intensity of activity relative to a place's accessibility and the place's vitality relative to the proximity and range of uses.

Height and Massing

- The scale of a building, its arrangement, volume and shape in relation to other buildings or groups of buildings and spaces.
- The size of the parts of a building.
- The impact on views, vistas and skylines.

Building Type

- The size of the floor-plate, its storey heights and location of access.
- The relationship of the building to adjacent buildings and how it relates to external space at ground level.
- The nature and extent of the building's setback at upper floors and roof level.

Façade and Interface

- The relationship of the building to the street.
- The rhythm, pattern and harmony of the building's openings relative to its enclosure.
- The nature of the building's setback, boundary treatment and frontage condition at street level.
- The architectural expression of its entrances, corners, roofscape and projections.

Details and Materials

- The appearance of the building in relation to the art, craftsmanship, building techniques and details of the various building components.
- The texture, colour, pattern, durability and treatment of its materials.
- The lighting, signage, security measures and treatment of shopfronts and entrances.

3.1 Urban Grain

Existing Condition

Urban Blocks

The street pattern of the town was established by the Lowther family between 1637 and 1755. It follows a roughly orthogonal grid pattern laid out on a north-east/south-west axis, approximately parallel to the harbour front. To the south-west of the town centre was the original village settlement and the street network around Market Place and James Street reflects the meandering route of the Pow Beck. Lowther Street was conceived as the principal street, connecting the castle with the town.

The size of the urban blocks varies across the town and is a reflection of the ad-hoc sequential setting out of the town rather than a predetermined masterplan. Between the early streets of Strand, King Street and Chapel Street, the blocks are particularly shallow (22m and 30m respectively). As the town expanded south-eastwards the blocks increased in depth. The expansion of the town was eventually restricted by the grounds of the castle. This meant that the blocks between Queen Street and Scotch Street were too deep to be economical as single blocks. Consequently, intermediate streets (i.e. Fox Lane and Carter Lane) were introduced to reduce the block size and achieve efficiencies.

The sides of the blocks parallel to the harbour are particularly wide, whereas those in the opposite axis, parallel to Lowther Street, are quite narrow. As a consequence, permeability in the town centre parallel to the harbour is very good, however, in the opposite direction, through to the harbour, there are relatively few routes between the blocks. This may

be a legacy from the Lowther's desire to separate the busy harbour from the gentrified town centre. It has however stifled opportunities to connect the now attractive harbour back to the town centre.

A number of the original blocks have been joined and this has also compromised the permeability

in the town. For example on Fox Lane the Dixons development severed the historic connection between Scotch Street and Queen Street. The removal of this through-route has had a negative impact upon the area.



Dixons building blocking former route of Fox Lane



Plan of urban blocks

Existing Condition

Building Plots

The original plot sizes at Whitehaven were specifically defined by the Lowther Estate to encourage people of modest means to build in the town, whilst discouraging land speculators. The width of the plots varied considerably and this was an intentional strategy by the Lowthers to attract as wide a circle of people as possible. Sir John Lowther's approach was "*set different rates and let 'em choose where they will*". Larger plots were promoted along the main streets, particularly Lowther Street; however the plot subdivision here still had a considerable number of narrow frontages.

Corner plots were in general larger, again to promote grand houses at key positions. In some cases this strategy back-fired on the Lowthers when speculative builders subdivided the plots into several smaller plots containing more modest dwellings.

Redevelopment in the town after 1800 has seen a number of original plots amalgamated into single plots to accommodate larger single ownerships. An extreme example of this is Wilkinsons on Roper Street where several dozen smaller plots have been combined. The negative impact upon the surrounding streets is apparent and clearly this scale of development in the town centre needs to be handled more sensitively in the future. It is inevitable that demands for large development sites will be placed upon the town. Therefore it is important that measures are taken to encourage development whilst responding to the intrinsic rhythm of the town's historic plot widths.

Street Frontages

It is part of the richness of the Whitehaven's townscape that random plot widths sit cheek by jowl in a harmonious street scene. The repetitive treatment of window and door openings sees the buildings presented in vertical modular fashion ranging from 2 to more than 6 bays wide. Facades that depart from this order tend to appear alien and do not sit comfortably in the street scene.



Blank facade of new building on right contrasts with existing street scene, Church Street

Principles to be Adopted:

- Do not amalgamate blocks where permeability may be compromised;
- Reinstatement of historic urban blocks that have been lost;
- Maintain the permeability of the town and encourage reinstatement of lost historic routes;
- Encourage subdivision of blocks to enable greater permeability towards the harbour;
- Retain the cohesive rhythm of the town's street frontages based upon the historic building plots. Proposals that depart from this must be of high quality, fully justified in design terms and not detract from the overall street scene;
- Do not amalgamate building plots where the historic rhythm of the street frontages may be compromised;
- Large developments should be located where they can be accommodated without disrupting the historic urban grain, and;
- Infill developments should recognise the rhythm of adjacent façades.



Plan showing building plots

3.2 Density and Mix

Existing Condition

Developed Land

The principal street frontages in the town centre were effectively in place by 1755, thanks largely to the Lowther family. The town was laid out to achieve an efficient and compact urban settlement. Consequently, the town centre has been densely developed for over two hundred years. Open space is restricted primarily to the St Nicholas churchyard and Market Place. Subsequent development either replaced existing buildings or built in rear courts or private gardens to large houses. The increasingly dense layout led to serious social problems and various measures were taken from the 1850s onwards to reduce the degree of development (particularly sub-standard housing) within courtyards. However a number of courtyards such as Rudds Court still remain providing attractive living environments to their residents. These courtyards are an intrinsic part of Whitehaven's historic townscape and should be retained and improved wherever possible. Many former eighteenth century houses have, over the years, been subdivided into shops and flats. Ground floor retail usage has continued but in many cases upper floors now lie vacant or under-used. This has had a detrimental impact upon the street scene as owners are reluctant to adequately maintain partially empty buildings.

Range of Uses

An analysis of the building usage at ground floor level across the town centre confirms that much of the historic usage has continued to this day. The map

of the town shown opposite illustrates the historic shopping routes along Market Place, King Street and Lowther Street. Residential accommodation is found across the entire town centre, either in the upper floors over shops or in predominantly residential quarters to the north-east and south. Industrial and large scale retail and leisure uses have been pushed to the periphery of the town centre. Small scale office usage is spread across the town centre. Larger offices such as the new Copeland Centre are located on the outskirts. Recent office development has taken place away from the town centre and represents a lost opportunity to stimulate the economy of the town. The harbour frontage has a significant number of underused buildings or sites and clearly represents the greatest challenge facing the regeneration of the town.

Night-life activity in the town is concentrated along Tangier Street and consists largely of pubs, bars and casual eating venues. The town no longer has a cinema or theatre and is clearly lacking the broad range of leisure uses needed to attract visitors in the evening and weekends.

The town centre has a number of cleared sites that have been given over to surface car parking. Where these occur off tertiary side streets the impact may be acceptable, however on main streets such as Catherine Street the impact is very noticeable and seriously undermines the overall street scene.



Back houses, Chapel Street



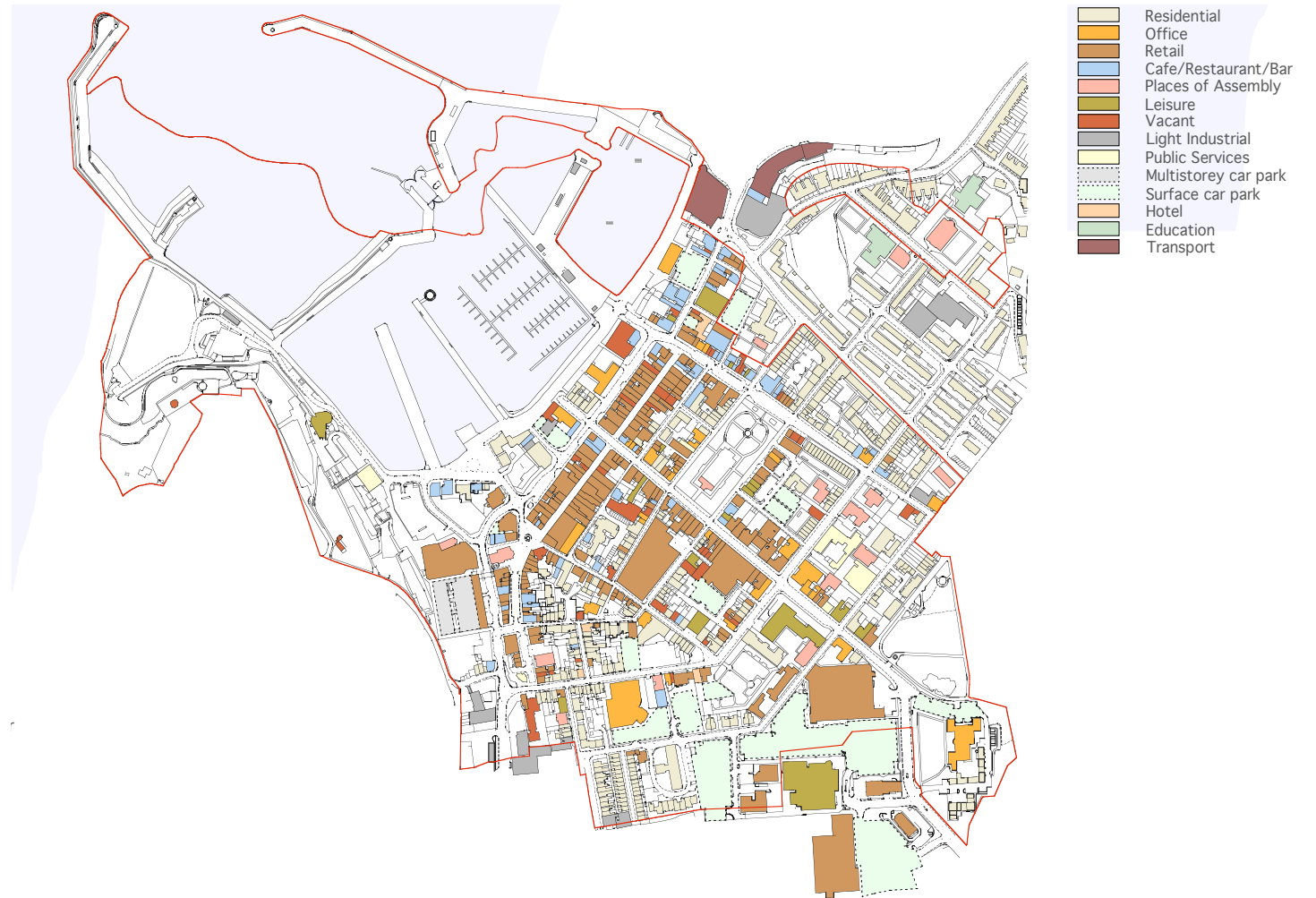
Shopping on King Street



Tangier Street



Millennium Promenade



Plan of building uses

Plans showing building entrances



Catherine Street and the surrounding area



The Strand and the surrounding area



Market Place and King Street and the surrounding area



Swingpump Lane and the surrounding area

Street Activity

Active building frontages are an important ingredient in making the street attractive and safe. A study of the active entrances along King Street, Swingpump Lane and The Strand illustrates how the active/non-active nature of these parts of the town influences their success or otherwise. In particular, the lack of activity along The Strand and Swingpump Lane has fundamentally impacted upon the quality of these streets and their perceived level of safety.



The Strand



Swingpump Lane



Gap site, Roper Street



Gap site, Roper Street

Principles to be Adopted:

- Retain and enhance the dense layout of the historic town centre;
- Retain and enhance the historic courtyards;
- Retain and reinforce the activity along all streets;
- Encourage opening-up of blank façades facing the street to introduce activity;
- Encourage high quality re-development of gap sites and surface car parks fronting onto streets;
- Encourage sensitive re-use or conversion of vacant buildings and upper floors;
- Encourage leisure and retail usage to the harbour frontage;
- Encourage greater commercial usage within the town centre to support existing facilities, and;
- Encourage uses that will attract visitors to the town in the evening and weekends.

3.3 Height and Massing

Existing Condition

Scale

Prior to the involvement of the Lowther family in the early seventeenth century the buildings that made up the small fishing village of Whitehaven would have been one or two storey high, similar to many rural Cumbrian buildings of the time. The aim of Sir John Lowther (1642 – 1706) however, was to transform Whitehaven and create an urban setting to support the rapidly expanding port. Sir John wanted to see substantial buildings reflecting the civic quality found in places like London where major redevelopment was taking place following the great fire of 1666.

Regulations were introduced in 1699 by the Lowther family requiring individuals to build “*at least three Stories high besides the Sellars and Garretts, and in all not under twenty eight foot in height from the Levell of the Street to the Square of the Side Walls*”. Heights varied from street to street, being a minimum of 28ft on Irish Street and parts of Queen Street, 26ft on Lowther Street and other parts of Queen Street, 24ft on Church Street and 18ft on School Lane. Street widths were set out to reflect the proposed building heights. Once the standard was set, subsequent developments tended to roughly follow suit in line with the Lowther’s stated aims to erect houses “answerable” or “of equal height” to others in the same street. The majority of buildings built in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have adopted these standards and the overall impression is of a 3-storey town. Buildings taller than 3 storeys are limited to a small collection of 4 and 5 storey properties such as hotels, former warehouses and church belltowers.

In the past there have been few attempts to introduce tall buildings into the town centre. Construction economies and relatively low land values has meant that there has been little or no commercial pressure to exceed the town’s 3-storey model. However, it is perhaps inevitable that future developments may seek to introduce tall buildings into the town and care is needed to ensure that where introduced, tall buildings should contribute to and not detract from Whitehaven’s townscape.

Grouping

The buildings throughout the town centre are generally laid out side by side in compact continuous rows. Adjacent buildings tend to vary in height and width. In many cases the architectural design is also varied. This reflects the strategy adopted by the Lowthers to allow sporadic development of individual building plots along the set out streets. Consequently these are not “terraces” in the truest sense of the term. In ‘*The English Terraced House*’, Stefan Muthesius defines a terrace as the “*architectural intention.....to bind together a row of houses as tightly as possible to give an impression, an illusion of unity*”. The lack of conformity in the buildings at Whitehaven conveys a massing that is both modest in scale and varied. The massing increases with some recent buildings such as the Civic Hall where clearly a degree of civic importance is sought and the mass of the building is expressed as a single large volume.



Stone built former warehouse, Carter Lane



Plan of building heights

Size of the Building Parts

The buildings within the town centre present a relatively consistent street façade with an undulating eaves line governed by changes in storey heights and the number of storeys to individual plots. The roofs are generally low-key, double-pitched structures running parallel to the main façade. In some cases the roof is further played down by a parapet on the main façade. The architectural expression of the older seventeenth century buildings is simply the repetitive organisation of the rectangular window and door openings. The openings are vertically proportioned and human in scale. The overall impression is that of a harmonious assembly with a simple integrity.

As residents in the town sought somewhat grander buildings the architectural treatment to the street elevations tended to become more elaborate. Plinth and stringcourses were introduced to the façade along with cornices and parapets to eaves level. Arched window openings were introduced along with elaborate entrance doorways. Classical architectural features such as pilasters, columns and rusticated lower floors were favoured for a number of civic buildings and banks. These features tended to emphasise the ground floor as the principal level with upper floors reducing in height towards eaves level. Many of the ground floors are raised from street level and this increased further the prominence of the ground floor. However, despite the range of architectural styles adopted in the past 200 years the town centre retains a consistency in the expression of parts of the buildings and their human scale.



Undulating eaves line to Irish Street



Parapet eaves, Irish Street



Arched window heads, Irish Street



String courses, Irish Street



Raised ground floor, Church Street



Views and Vistas

There are few buildings that break the skyline across the town. The churches do not have significant spires and there are few tall towers or chimneys (the Candlestick Chimney at the former Wellington Pit being a notable exception). There are several successful street views within Whitehaven, most notably along Lowther Street towards the Castle and Queen Street towards St James' Church. There are also discreet views of the St Nicholas churchyard from adjacent side streets and views towards the open hillside backdrop to the town. Vistas of the town are enjoyed from Harbour View to the west and from the seaward approach to the harbour.

There are instances where views have been terminated by low-grade elevations. These include the termination of Fox Lane as seen from Scotch Street and view along College Street from Church Street. These are lost opportunities and efforts should be made to replace these facades with higher quality buildings that exploit the potential of street views.



Views towards greenery along Duke Street



Views towards greenery along Irish Street



The harbour



Towards St James' Church, along Queen Street



Glimpses towards the churchyard along Addison Street



Poor quality buildings at the termination of vistas along College Street

Principles to be Adopted:

- Retain the predominant building height of 3 storeys;
- Height differences between adjacent buildings is consistent with the town's character but this should not exceed a full storey height;
- Proposed building heights greater than 4 storeys must be of high architectural quality and fully substantiated in urban design terms;
- Encourage increased building height and high quality design on important street corners, at the termination of vistas, on the harbour frontage and on the periphery of the town. Ensure that any significant increase in height is assessed from all vantage points;
- Buildings whose massing and scale conflicts with the predominant pattern of the town centre must be of high architectural quality, fully substantiated in urban design terms and not detract from the overall street scene;
- Maintain existing views and vistas, and;
- Encourage the creation of new views and vistas.

3.4 Building Type

Existing Condition

Floor Plates

Building floor plates in the town are still largely based upon the layouts established in the 18th century. The larger of these would have been merchant's houses with attached warehouses. The majority of the floor plates, however, are small-scale, residential, 3 storey blocks, possibly with a cellar or basement. The introduction of cellars came as a consequence of raising road levels to dispose of discarded ballast in the harbour and refuse from the town. Recent developments such as the Civic Hall and retail and leisure buildings have introduced relatively large floor plates to the town centre.

Storey Heights

Storey heights in the town centre vary significantly. This can be very apparent between adjacent properties built at different times by residents of different financial standing. This reflects the strategy of the Lowther family to offer building plots to a range of people relocating to Whitehaven. It was appreciated that artisans were just as important to the success of the town as the wealthy merchants and gentry. The ground floor storey height is generally taller to accommodate principal rooms, shops or workshops.

Access

Access to properties is invariably directly from the street, often via a set of steps to a raised ground floor. In some cases the entrance level is raised virtually a full storey height and an elaborate stepped approach provided. The arrangement of entrances addressing the public realm enlivens the street and makes the town easy to read and navigate.

In the retained courtyards such as Rudds Court the internal court is accessed via an archway (sometimes gated) in the street façade with the building entrances accessed directly from the courtyard.



Storey heights vary considerably on Roper Street and Church Street



Elaborate stepped approach Howgill



Figure ground plan (2008)



Civic Hall, Lowther



Cellar access, New Lowther Street



Former YMCA 44-45 Lowther Street

Relationship to other Buildings and Spaces

Buildings generally relate strongly to their neighbours and have connected party walls. They are also built up to the pavement edge defining a strong street presence. Some buildings have departed from this approach by being either fully detached or setting back from the street to accommodate basement access or raised entrances. A number of early merchant's houses were built in a 'U' or 'H' plan with the house set back from the street with a warehouse wing on either side connecting with the street. The Waverly Hotel on Tangier Street and the former YMCA at 44-45 Irish Street are examples of this model.

The Civic Hall on Lowther Street is one of the few instances in the town centre where a building has been set back significantly from the street edge to accommodate a formal external space. This is a legitimate response to the public role of the building, however, with such a solution its success or otherwise relies upon the quality of the landscape treatment and the environmental quality of the space itself. In the case of the Civic Hall the external spaces are underused and contribute little to the overall townscape.

Treatment of Upper Floors and Roofs

The building façades generally present a single edifice with few if any set backs or protrusions to the upper levels. Bay windows are rare and the overall impression is of a strong uninterrupted street façade. The general form of the buildings at roof level is a simple dual pitched roof, parallel to the

street. Gable ended roofs are present where wings of former warehouses have been taken up to the pavement edge. Some buildings have dormers, but these are not particularly common. Shared chimney stacks between properties are uncommon as most building plots were developed at different times. Consequently, the chimney stacks for each property are often sited to only one of the party walls. The resultant effect is a random roofline interrupted by varying chimney structures.

On corners the older buildings maintain a continuous building line with no corner splay. However, a number of later shops do splay the ground floor (and upper floors in a few cases) to create a corner entrance feature. The roofs to corner buildings are either hipped or gabled. The gable end usually fronts onto the principal street.



Bay window are uncommon, New Lowther Street and Roper Street



Dormer; Lowther Street



Splayed corners; Church Street and Queen Street



Principles to be Adopted:

- Retain the size of floor plates within the town centre;
- Conserve and enhance the variety of storey heights;
- Building entrances to face the public realm;
- Conserve and enhance the town's character ie. individual buildings grouped to form strong street frontages;
- Buildings to extend to the rear of the public footpath. Buildings set back from the pavement edge must be fully substantiated in urban design terms and not detract from the overall street scene. The landscape treatment of any set back is to be of high quality;
- Avoid excessive modelling of the street façade that may detract from the character of the overall street scene;
- Buildings on street corners to present a continuous building line, and;
- Avoid excessive modeling of the roofline unless it is fully substantiated in urban design terms and does not detract from the overall street scene.

3.5 Facade and Interface

Existing Condition

Rhythm and Pattern of Openings

The majority of eighteenth century houses were aligned with the street front in accordance with Sir John Lowther's desire to have a continuous row arrangement and not allow any ground to 'lie waste' in front of houses. Examples exist that did not follow this principle, most notably the Waverly Hotel on Tangier Street (formerly the residence of Captain Senhouse, built c1686).

Whitehaven's buildings are generally of masonry construction with harled or stucco finish. Openings are simple repetitive punched-hole rectangular windows and doors laid out in an ordered pattern.

The proportion of openings to solid wall is generally less than 30%. In some cases the windows are grouped in pairs or more to signify principal rooms. Alterations to properties have taken place over generations and the relationship and positioning of openings has been modified in numerous instances. A number of former warehouses that would have been windowless have been converted to dwellings and new window openings formed in the façade. However, the rhythm and pattern of the openings in relation to their enclosure is consistent throughout the town and retains a harmonious assembly.



Windows grouped, Roper Street



Typical street scene, Queen Street

Frontage at Street Level

At street level the building frontages generally define the street edge, often accessed by a flight of steps. Some buildings have elaborate stepped approaches and raised entrances. Buildings that were set back from the street would have been screened with low walls and railings, however, much of the town's original ironwork has been removed over the years. Consequently, the clear definition of public/private space has been lost. Entrances vary from simple square stone surrounds to delightfully elaborate classically proportioned doorways. At corners it was common for entrances to be placed on the secondary street, whilst the principal elevation faced the main street. The resultant effect being somewhat curiously out of balance. Few bay windows exist on façades, those that do tend to be found on nineteenth century or twentieth century buildings. The architectural expression of the buildings in the town centre is generally focused upon just the façade. Roofs are kept low-key and not strongly expressed. There is a proliferation of chimneys at roof level but they tend not to be of particular architectural merit, the exception being the chimneys on exposed gable ends fronting streets.



Original ironwork, Roper Street

Principles to be Adopted:

- Conserve and enhance the buildings within the Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas;
- New developments or alterations to existing buildings to acknowledge the prevailing rhythm, pattern and proportion of the building facades within the town;
- Missing or under-developed street frontages to be repaired or in-filled with good quality replacements, and;
- Repair and reinstate boundary treatment to the street frontage.

3.6 Details and Materials

Existing Condition

External Walls

The majority of the buildings within Whitehaven are constructed in local rubble sandstone with dressed stone openings. Render or harling has been applied primarily to improve weather-proofing but also to disguise alterations made to the façade as the internal layout and usage of the buildings changed. Smooth render or stucco is often 'coursed' to imply a stone effect. The texture of the harled finish is perhaps more representative of the coastal and Cumbrian vernacular and is arguably a more successful treatment. Quoins are present on many corner buildings often to convey a degree of importance or civic quality.

Attempts were made by the Lowthers in the seventeenth century to encourage the use of brick in the town. This was partly to deter excessive rock excavation in nearby quarries but also to encourage builders to make use of the brickworks controlled by the Lowther estate. A third reason might also have been the Lowther's desire to replicate the attractive appearance of London's new streets. Whatever the reason, the town's builders rejected brick in favour of stone construction - perhaps because it was cheaper and they were more familiar with it.

Later buildings such as the former Methodist Church on Lowther Street/Scotch Street introduced ashlar red sandstone. Unfortunately the stone is relatively soft and weathers badly in Whitehaven's maritime environment. In the twentieth century a variety of building materials were employed such as brick, ashlar stone and curtain walling. However, none of these materials have become fully established in the town and they have failed to usurp the established pallet of render and stone dressings. Indeed, in many cases where unfamiliar materials have been used the overall effect has proven to



Smooth render on stone Carter Lane



Quoins expressed, East Strand



Red sand stone former Methodist church, Lowther Street



Stone and brick construction, Tax Office building on the harbour

be unsuccessful. The Tax Office building on the harbour front was constructed relatively recently and is constructed in stone and brick. Despite the relatively robust detailing of the building, the overall effect is of another age and is somewhat alien to the building tradition of the town centre. New developments should be encouraged to be of their own time. Recently built buildings such as the Copeland Centre have reverted to the use of render. The improved weather resistance of modern renders has helped re-establish this form of treatment.



Stone and brick, West Strand



Mixed styles, Lowther Street



Copeland Centre, Scotch Street

Roofs

Roofs are typically dual pitch and constructed of Westmorland or Welsh slate. Gutter details are generally simple junctions with no projecting roof edge or bracketing. However, in some cases a cornice has been used at eaves level to express the top of the façade. Gables at roof level are generally simple verge edges with a flush mortar/slate detail; however, on important street façades parapets are

also common. Rainwater gutters and downpipes are in cast iron and exposed on the façade. Older properties have hopper-head rainwater collectors at the head of downpipes. In some cases slates have been replaced with inappropriate roof tiling that differs from the flat appearance of slate. This practice must be avoided on all accounts.



Simple gutter and verge details, Cross Street



Rainwater hopper, Roper Street



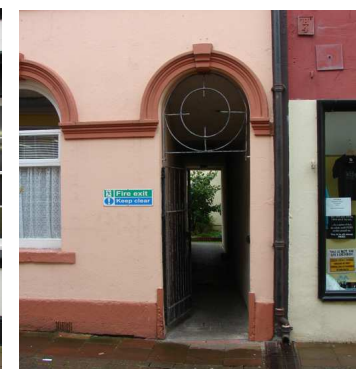
Inappropriate roof repairs, Wellington Row

Entrances

Entrance doorways on the earliest buildings are simple square-headed affairs with stone surrounds. The doorways are often set back into the property to partially accommodate steps up to the ground floor. This was in response to the Lowther's building regulation restricting the distance steps could protrude into the pavement. Over a period of time grander properties introduced elaborate classical portals, some with arched fanlights. Many of these portals are of exceptionally high architectural quality. The entrances to the inner courtyards are carriage height, spanned by flat arched stones, although in some cases courtyards are accessed by narrow ginnels.



Coach entrance to courtyard,
Roper Street



Pedestrian entrance to courtyard,
Roper Street



Simple entrance with stone surround,
New Lowther street



Raised entrance, Church Street



Raised entrance with classical treatment,
Church Street



Elaborate stepped entrance

Windows

In the early seventeenth century, most buildings would have had small stone mullioned windows with hinged casements. However, the introduction of more sophisticated sash and case arrangement led the Lowthers to stipulate that “the Windows of the first and second storey” were “to be transomed, And in the same together with the Doer’s to be Hewen Stone work”. In many cases older window types were replaced by sash and case frames. The simply arranged repetitive window openings with vertically proportioned 6 pane casements set within a simply proportioned façade creates extremely harmonious elevations and is a main feature of Whitehaven’s townscape. Victorian façades adopted two pane casements instead of the Georgian, six panes, however the vertical proportion and scale of the window openings were maintained. Many of the Georgian buildings have had windows replaced with two pane casements with a resultant loss in the original detail and composition of the façade. Worst still, original sash and case windows have been replaced by poorly proportioned bulky modern substitutes.

As with door openings the earlier window openings had simple square-headed “Hewen stone work” surrounds. Later examples introduced moulded surrounds and classically detailed sills and heads.

A number of former Georgian warehouses remain within the town centre, having been converted to other uses. In many case the intake doors on the street frontage have been retained along with swinging pulley arms.



Loss of Georgian astrigals from building on right, Duke Street.



Unsympathetic window alterations to ground and first floors, Roper Street.



Unsympathetic window alterations using curtain walling, Church Street.

Ornamental Ironwork

Although much of the town's ornate railings have been lost there is still a significant amount left and the delicate Georgian ironwork to entrances and basement wells contributes significantly to the town's character.



Elegant handrail to entrance, Church Street



Preserved railings, Roper Street

Colour

The town has become known for its brightly coloured building façades, a common feature of many coastal towns. It is unclear when this was adopted at Whitehaven. Most buildings would have originally been exposed natural stone. Harling would have been applied to prevent washing out of lime mortar and this would have been lime-washed to improve the appearance. Paint colours would have been very limited and relatively expensive. However, in recent years a vast range of colours and paint treatments have been made available. The use of colour has been unchecked throughout the town and this has led to a number of inappropriate examples. The most successful use of colour tends to be warm, off-white earth or neutral colours. Contrasting, slightly darker stone tones are best for architectural features such as stone dressings. Bold primary colours are seldom successful as they tend to increase the visual bulk of

a building and make a façade look overwhelming. This creates an imbalance in the composition of the townscape and detracts from the town's character. Where there is a clear demarcation between adjacent façades in the same building line (ie. a noticeable difference in building height) it is acceptable for the wall colours to change. Conversely, where the elevations on adjacent properties are very similar the colours of the facades and their components should be consistent.

In many Georgian buildings, particularly warehouses, the windows were often painted dark green, red or grained varnished. However it has become the norm to paint window frames white or off-white and this should be continued across the town centre. On non-domestic buildings alternative window colours may be acceptable when part of an overall colour

scheme for an entire building. Black, rich dark or muted colours or grained varnish are generally appropriate for entrance doors.

The roofs in Whitehaven are predominantly dark in colour creating a stable and robust effect. Consequently, light or coloured materials such as red tiles should be avoided.

Rainwater goods should be painted either black or the colour of the background wall. Georgian railings and ornamental ironwork would originally have been painted bronze green. However, most are now painted black, which generally is acceptable.



Inappropriate use of colour, Duke Street



Strand Street



Duke Street



Duke Street



Pairs of buildings should be painted consistently, Roper Street on Fox Lane



Successful use of colour, Church Street



Courtyard off Queen Street



Cross Street



East Strand

Shopfronts

The town has a number of attractive and historic shopping streets. The quality of the shopfronts and associated signage varies enormously. Successful examples tend to have a well proportioned shop front that has an architectural relationship to the building above and on either side. Where they exist, original shopfronts should be retained. If original shopfronts have been covered up they should be restored and brought back into use. It is not acceptable for 'corporate' signage to overwhelm a shopfront on a historic building. Most high street shops now recognise the importance of a sensitively designed shopfront that reflects the quality of the building they choose to trade from. The creation of a strong identity for an individual shop is secondary to achieving an appropriate balance within the

town's street scene as a whole.

Colour schemes should clarify the architectural form of the frontage and should not merely apply alien treatments and designs. Most successful colour schemes employ only one or two colours. The use of several colours requires a careful balancing of elements which can be difficult to achieve. Dark colours generally work best for timber or aluminium shopfronts. Stone shopfronts should be left unpainted.

Lighting of shop signs should be discrete and not overpowering. Neon or back lit fluorescent box signs should not be used. Where security shutters are unavoidable they should be open grilles set behind glazing allowing shop displays to be visible out of

trading hours. Traditional retractable awnings add interest and to the street scene and protection from the elements.

Building Clutter

In many cases, items including security alarms, satellite dishes, TV aerials, extract ventilation plant and grilles, meter enclosures and flood lighting have been added to principal street façades. It is essential that the installation of these components is controlled and their positioning handled sensitively and discretely. Specific planning guidance is given in relation to these items and it is important that building owners adhere to these requirements.



King Street
Unsympathetic shopfronts



King Street



Market Place



Clutter on street facades, Roper Street



Successful use of a single dark colour, King Street



Successful shopfront - retention of traditional frontage, Duke Street



Successful shopfront - use of traditional awning, Duke Street

Principles to be Adopted:

- Encourage sensitive repair and restoration of existing buildings and their components using local traditional building techniques and materials;
- Where applied colour is used, adhere to the following:
 - Use warm, buff earth colours on render.
 - Only use contrasting colours where there is an architectural justification (i.e. at quoins, window cills etc.). The degree of contrast to be kept within a subtle range of warm-buff.
 - Window frames to be off-white.
 - Doors to be black, rich dark or muted colours or grained varnish
 - Rainwater goods to be black
 - Railings to be black or bronze green
 - Encourage the use of crafted building techniques in new developments.
 - Roofs to be low-key, slate and dark in colour.
- Avoid building materials that are alien to the character of the town unless it is fully substantiated in urban design terms and does not detract from the overall street scene;
- Items such as security alarms, satellite dishes, extract vents and meter enclosures to be located out of view on secondary facades, and;
- Shopfronts should be of good quality, well proportioned and relate to the building above and to the side. They should also have an appropriate level of detail. Security screens should be open grill type placed behind the glazing. signage should relate closely to, and compliment, the building. Unsympathetic standard corporate signage is inappropriate for the town centre. Lighting to signage should also be fully considered, avoiding low-grade box signs.

Appendix 1

Bibliography and Sources of Further Information

Bibliography and Sources of Further Information

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Michael Moon

Sources of Further Information

For further information about Whitehaven's conservation areas please contact:

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