



Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas | Development Guide April 2009
Gough's Car Park Strand Street / Malborough Street



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.

Site Development Guide

Gough's Car Park Strand Street/Malborough Street

Purpose of the Guide

The information provided here is intended to be read in conjunction with the Whitehaven Town Centre Development Guide, 2008. The purpose of this Site Development Guide is to encourage appropriate high quality development on the site and the enhancement of the special historic character of this part of the town. The information provided should assist developers in appreciating the urban design issues relating specifically to the site and the town as a whole.



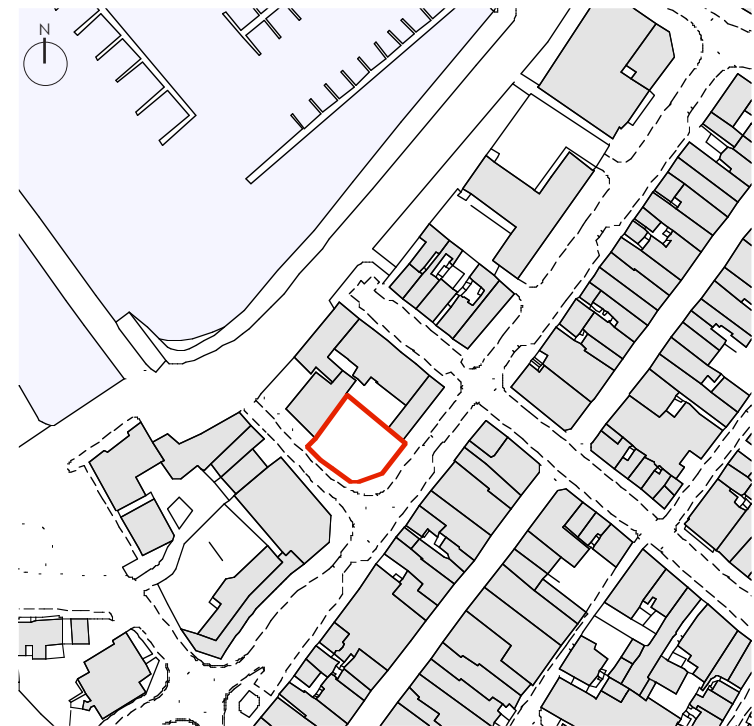
Aerial photograph

Background

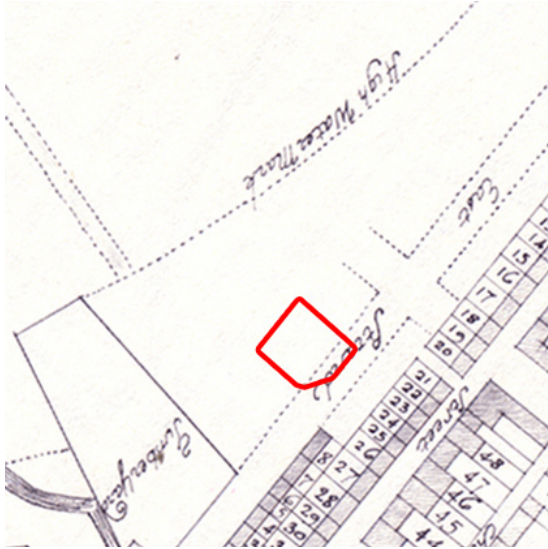
The site occupies the corner of Malborough Street and Strand Street. It is currently used as a private car park.

The northern and eastern boundaries are defined by blank masonry façades, between one and two storeys in height. The southern and western boundaries are defined by a raised kerb. The site is approximately square in plan with the southern corner splayed at 45°. This is also reflected in the layout of the Admiral House building on the opposite side of Malborough Street.

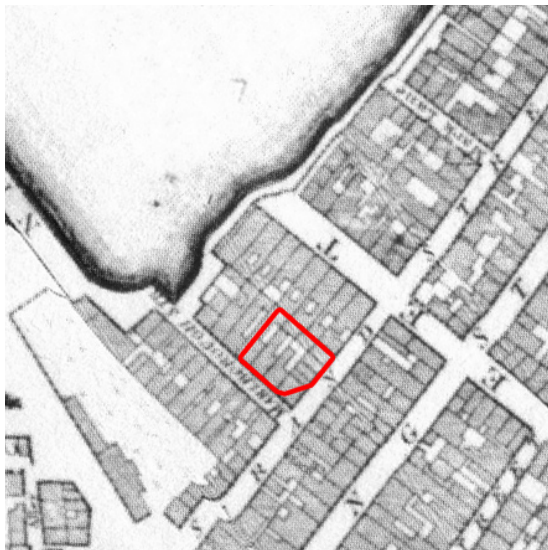
Malborough Street provides a vehicular route connecting Strand Street with the harbour quayside. Strand Street is a busy one way (south west to north east) route. There are a number of mature street trees on Strand Street, one of which is positioned on the footpath facing the site.



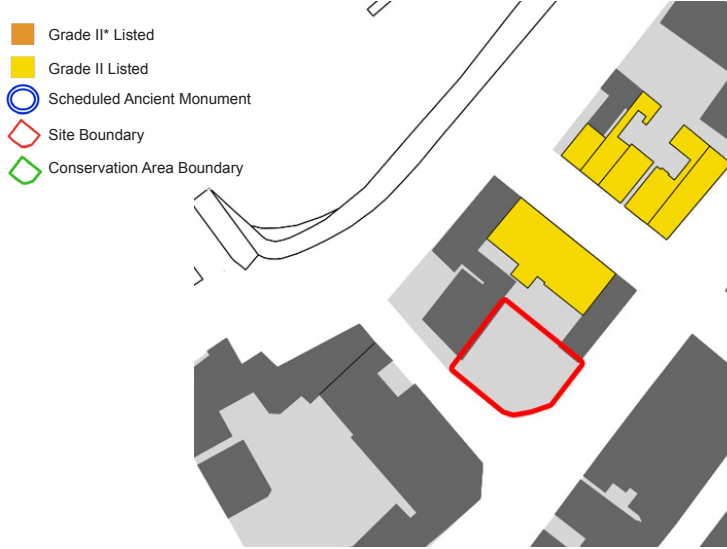
Site Plan



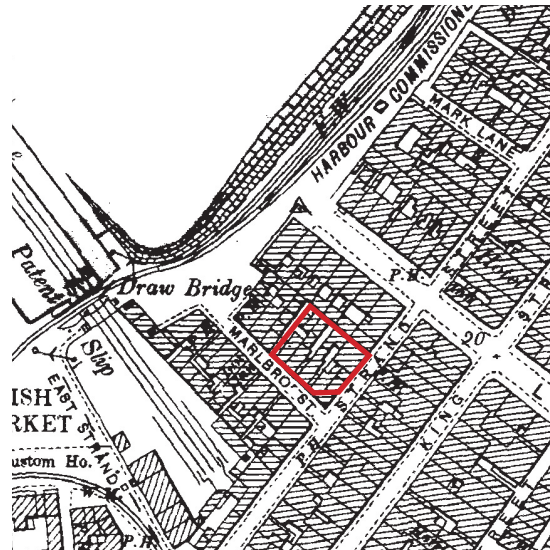
1710 Plan



1790 Plan



Listed Building Plan



1874 Plan

Historical Background

The site was first developed in the early 18th Century. The harbour originally terminated at Strand Street, however, once the harbour walls and quayside were established, land was reclaimed to construct a block of houses and warehouses between Strand Street and the harbour.

The harbour reached its heyday as a trading port in the 18th Century and the area would have been a hive of activity. Merchants would have been based here with accompanying warehouses. There would also have been artisan's workshops and shops.

The site is close to the historic marketplace. There was also a fish market on nearby East Strand.

The site was cleared some time in the 1970s resulting in a dramatic loss of the Georgian streetscape.

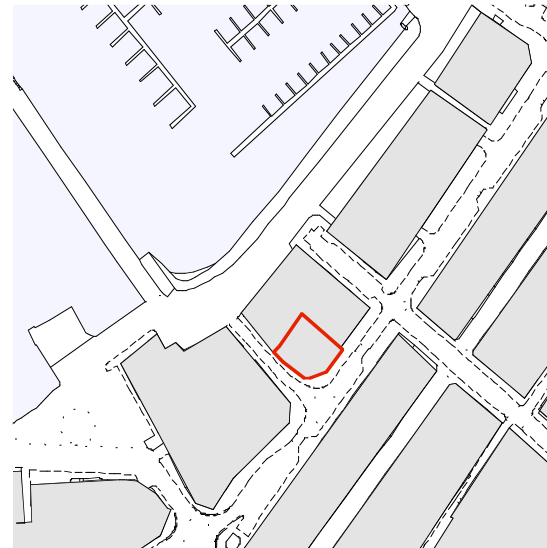
The site is within the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area. Adjacent buildings are not listed, however the site backs onto a row of grade II listed buildings on New Lowther Street.

Urban Blocks

The site is contained within an urban block that is roughly square in plan and defined by Marlborough Street and the harbour quay. A similar sized block used to exist to the north of New Lowther Street, extending up to Mark Lane – a former link between the harbour and Strand Street. The block shape is roughly square and is in contrast to the wide and shallow blocks along King Street and Chapel Street set out by the Lowther's in the 18th Century.

The blocks along King Street are extremely long and only interrupted by Lowther Street. This lack of permeability through to Strand Street and the harbour beyond was clearly an attempt to separate the gritty harbour from the town and its more genteel aspirations. Since its redevelopment in 2000 the harbour has become a focus for leisure craft and is now an extremely attractive amenity. The historical separation between the harbour and the town prevents the full exploitation of this important visitor facility.

The site block has a splayed corner to the south. This is also repeated on the opposite block across Marlborough Street. This realignment of the rectangular street pattern was introduced some time in the 1970s and is somewhat alien to the layout of the town, where corners are predominantly square. Some buildings do indeed have corner splays but these are generally very modest, containing a single entrance doorway.



Plan of Blocks



Example of a corner splay on Lowther Street



Building Plots Plan

Building Plots

The site was originally subdivided into a series of narrow frontage building plots set out in the 18th Century. A plan dated 1790 indicates approximately 4 plots along Marlborough Street, with the corner plot possibly subdivided into 5 smaller plots. The Lowthers tended to encourage corner plots to be more generous to encourage grander properties. However, this often led to builders buying corner plots and subdividing them. This would appear to have been the case on the site.

The overall consistency of the plot widths around the site has effectively been lost, consequently the site lacks the cohesion and consistency on the historic town centre.

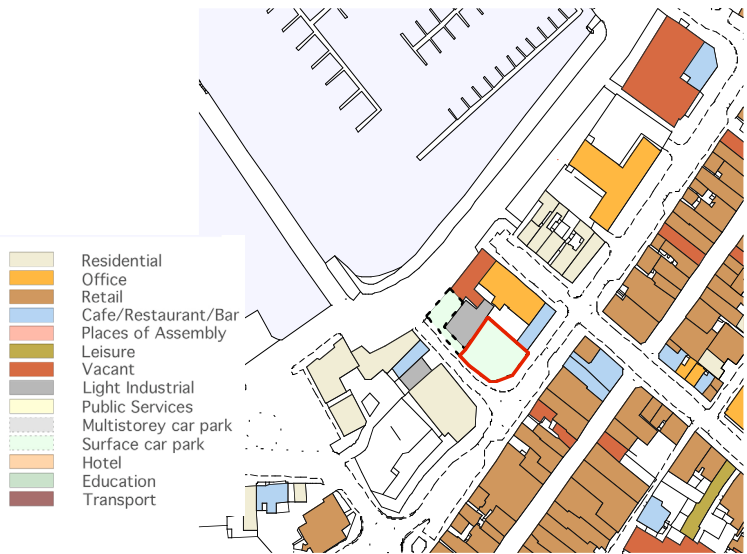
Density and Mix

The site was densely developed up until the 1970's when a number of Georgian properties were demolished to create a surface car park.

Adjacent uses include residential, leisure, offices and light industrial. The retail buildings on King Street back onto Strand Street but tend not to address the street, consequently Strand Street suffers from a lack of activity, creating a bland corridor of a route that is both uninviting and at times perceived as potentially threatening to pedestrians. On the harbour side there are few active buildings and consequently, the lack of activity detracts from the attractiveness of the upgraded quayside.



The back of King Street's shops face onto Strand Street



Building Usage Plan



Street Activity Plan

Heights and Massing

The predominant height of the Georgian town centre is 3 storeys. Storey heights vary considerably therefore the roofline often varies from building to building. The site backs onto a single storey outrigger of The Strand public house which fronts onto New Lowther Street. The façade of The Strand public house and the adjacent Georgian properties on New Lowther Street are all 3 storeys in height.

On Strand Street the properties to the south are generally 3 storeys in height with a portion of 4 storey buildings that have undergone roof extensions over the years. On the opposite side of Marlborough Street, Admiral House has an apparently greater mass and the rhythm of the streetscape changes noticeably.



Variation in storey heights creates an uneven roofline

Views and Vistas

Strand Street is a long, relatively narrow route that frames vistas towards Duke Street and Market Place. The openness of the site diminishes the impact of these vistas.

Malborough Street provides views towards the harbour from Strand Street and from the harbour into Strand Street. Unfortunately the façade on Strand Street that terminates the view from the harbour is not particularly attractive. The openness of the Marlborough Street/Strand Street junction also diminishes the framing of the view to the harbour.



Backs of buildings are currently visible



Marlborough Street looking towards the Quayside

Building Type

The floor plates of the original buildings on the site were relatively modest and consistent with those found elsewhere in the town. Admiral House is an example where larger floor plates have been introduced resulting in a somewhat alien appearance.

Façade and Interface

The character of the town's façades is defined by a consistent pattern of modest openings arranged in a repetitive sequence. In this part of the town the loss of original buildings has significantly diluted the overall character.

The adjacent buildings are generally built up to the back of the footpath defining a strong street edge. This is in keeping with the character of the town. The openness of the site at present detracts from the overall street scene.



Poor detailing



Inappropriate use of colour

Details and Materials

The building materials used in the town are predominantly painted harled walls and dark slate double pitched roofs. Windows are timber sash and case frames, often with stone surrounds.

Surrounding the site is a mix of old and relatively new buildings. Most adopt the town's traditional materials. Admiral House also adopts a traditional appearance but the proportions and detailing of the window surrounds and quoins is crude and the window frames are in fact bottom-hung casements attempting to look like sash and case frames. This is an example of inappropriate design in a conservation area. A well-designed contemporary façade that acknowledged the town's character would have been more appropriate in this location.

A number of buildings in the town centre are painted. The façade of the adjacent Strand public house is painted a vivid orange and is an inappropriate use of colour. Strong colours have a tendency to increase the visual bulk of the building and make the façade look overwhelming. This creates an imbalance in the overall composition of the townscape and detracts from the overall character of the town.

SITE RESPONSES

- Repair the urban grain and seek good quality development on the site, possibly in conjunction with the adjacent workshop site.
- Acknowledge the original Georgian plot widths and convey a degree of vertical subdivision in any future development.
- Introduce active frontages at ground level to Malborough Street and Strand Street.
- New buildings to be taken up to back of footpaths.
- Any on site parking to be concealed from public view, i.e. within an inner courtyard or underground.
- Realign the splayed corner to the site to reinstate a 90° corner at Malborough Street/Strand Street in order to reinforce the building line on both streets.
- New buildings to be no less than 3 storeys in height.
- Buildings greater than 3 storeys to be fully justified in urban design terms.
- New buildings should consider greater emphasis (height and detail) at the corner of Malborough Street and Strand Street.