



# 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

## Former Bus Depot, Bransty Row

### 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

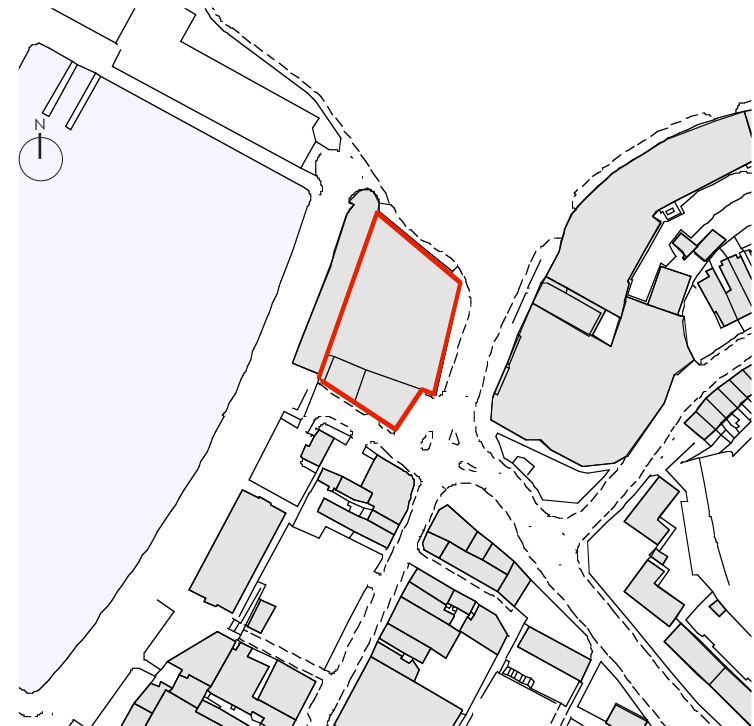
### Background

The site is vacant following the relocation of the town's bus depot. It is a strategic site, acting as a northern gateway to the town, fronting onto both Bransty Row and the recently upgraded harbour. It is also at the termination of George Street facing the widened junction with Bransty Row. The current building is of poor quality and has a detrimental impact upon the amenity of the area.

### Historical Background

The historic town centre was fully established by the 18th Century under the stewardship of the Lowther family. However the site was on the periphery of the town and it was not until the mid 19th Century that any significant development took place on site. Prior to this the site had been used as a shipyard and later for coal disposal supplied via the Bransty Arch that traversed Tangier Street and connected with Whinghill Colliery via a horse drawn wagon way. The railways replaced the need for moving coal by horsepower and consequently Bransty Arch became redundant and was eventually demolished in 1927.

Bransty Beck (stream) was culverted under Bransty



Site Plan

## Historical Background

Row prior to the end of the 18th Century. The stream was then routed through the site as an open cutting. The position of the Bransty Beck across the site appears to have been adjusted as the site became more developed and the adjacent harbour walls were realigned.

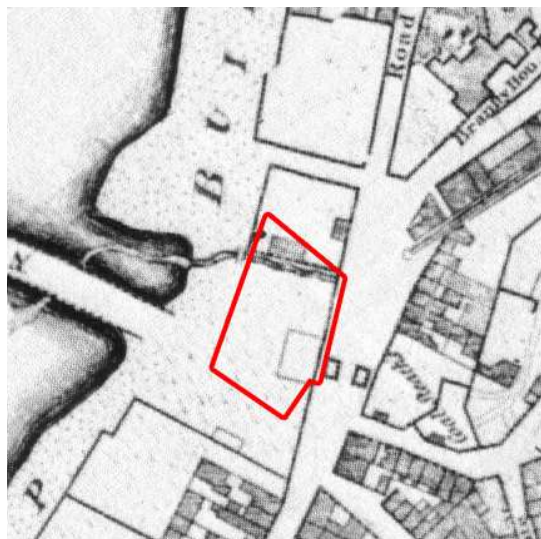
By 1900, the site had a collection of boat building sheds, workshops and open yards. The extensive railway network along the harbour quayside connected with the northern portion of the site. Bransty Beck split the site in half.

In the 1930s the majority of the site was developed as a bus depot. A public house was retained at the corner of Bransty Row and George Street. The building line on Bransty Row extended into Station Road and the former station buildings. In the 1970s the building on the corner of Bransty Row and George Street was demolished to form a forecourt to the bus depot.

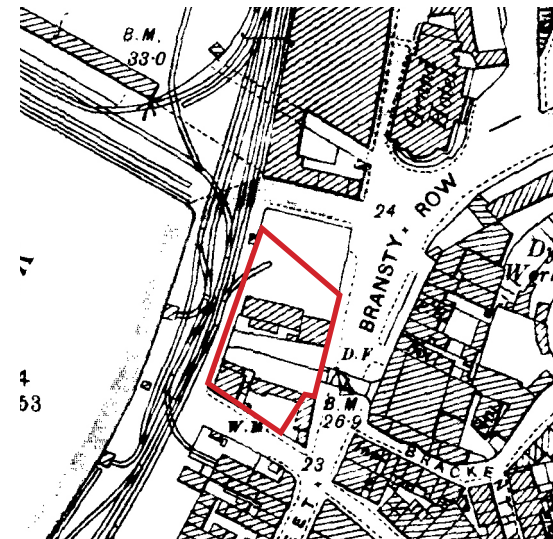
The site lies just outside the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area and is directly opposite the grade II listed Ali Taj restaurant building at 34-35 Tangier Street.



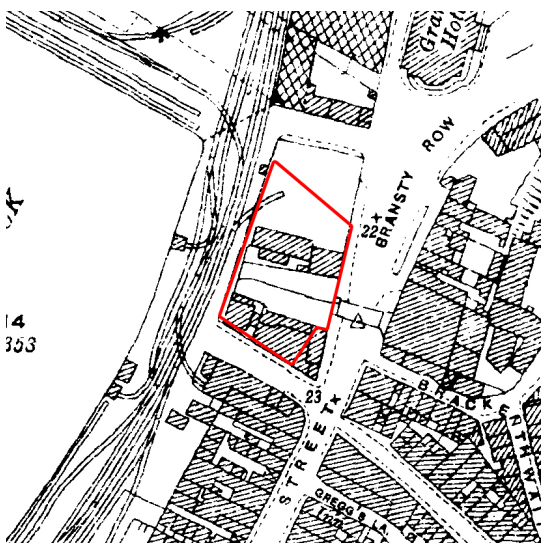
The Bransty Arch (Demolished 1927)



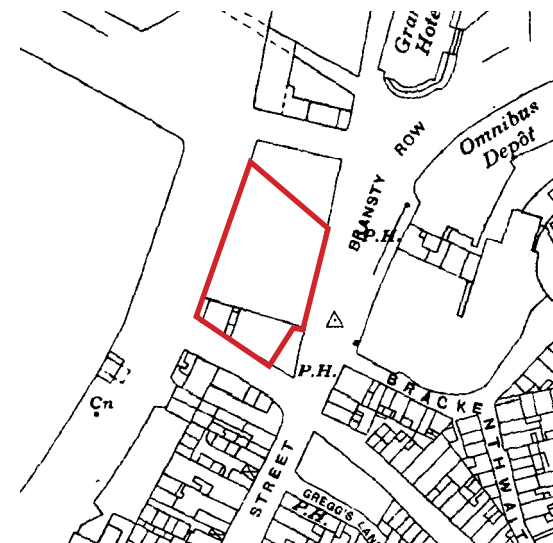
1790 Plan



1874 Plan

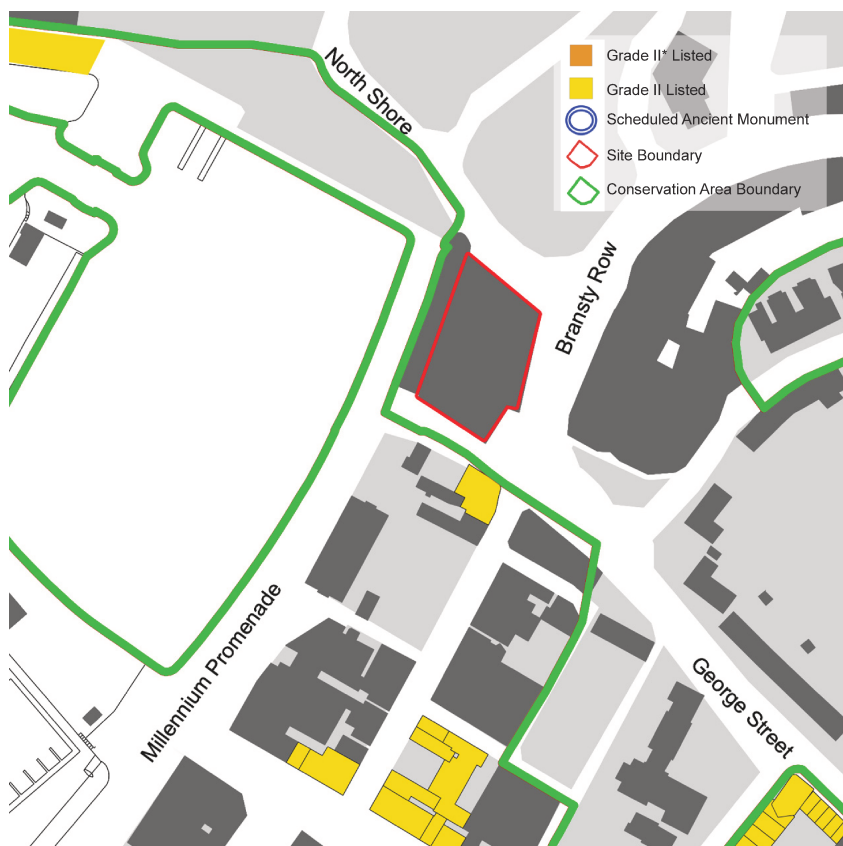


1925 Plan



1938 Plan





Listed Building Plan

### Urban Blocks

The urban block was originally defined by the line of the quayside and Bransty Row to the west and east respectively and by the extension of George Street to the line of the Harbour's north wall (later to be rebuilt further north).

Unlike the planned nature of most of the Georgian town centre, the urban block containing the site has been established in response to the practicalities of boat yards and coal distribution.

The block was established by the 1850s concurrent with the opening of Bransty Station. The block remained in this form until relatively recently when the northern edge was realigned to accommodate a new road layout accessing the harbour and the supermarket car park.

### Building Plots

The majority of the town centre is made up of narrow plots established by the Lowther Estate in the 17th and 18th Centuries. On this site however no definitive plot subdivision has been established. The site would appear to have been subdivided into only a small number of individual plots laid out in an adhoc fashion in response to the practical needs of the site owners.

On nearby Tangier Street, the plot widths reflect the historic subdivision although the consistency has been diminished due to the demolition of street frontages to create surface car parks.



Plan of Blocks



Plan of Building Plots

## Density and Mix of Uses

The site is vacant following the relocation of the bus depot. The majority of the site is developed as a single building, the southeast corner is an open forecourt. To the north of the site is a large surface car park. Early maps of the area show a number of significant buildings in this location including the main station building and the Grand Hotel. These buildings would have contributed significantly to the streetscape providing a strong termination to Tangier Street. The loss of these buildings and the reduction in density and enclosure has created a bland windswept junction bereft of any sense of place.

To the south of the site, a number of cleared sites have been turned into surface car parking. Again, the reduction in density has been detrimental to the area's amenity.

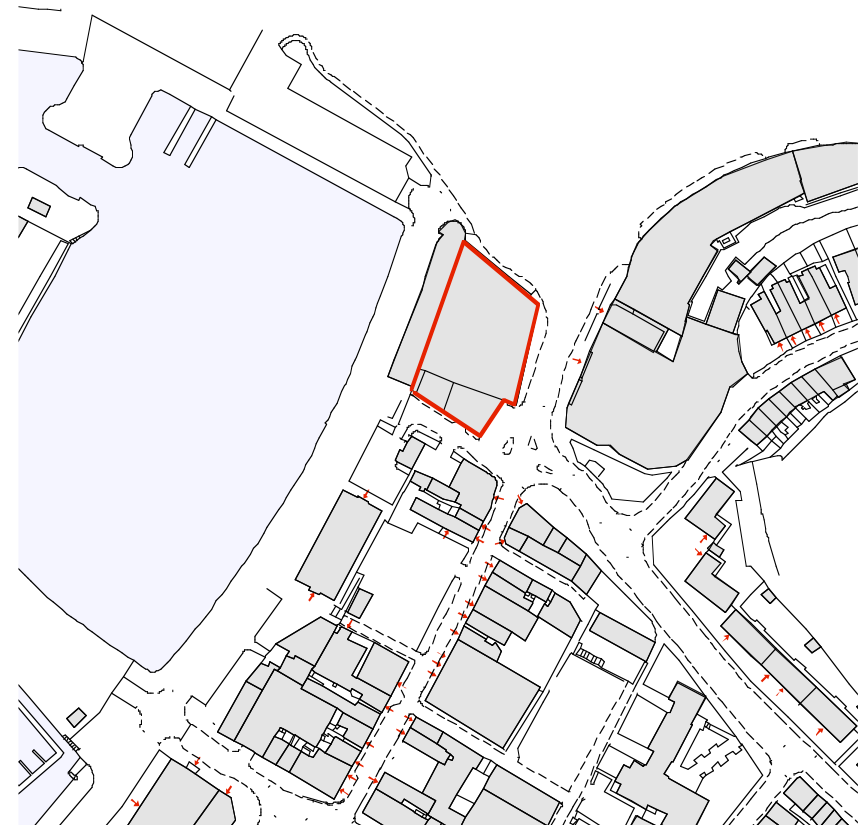
The uses around the site are primarily bars and restaurants reflecting the principal uses in Tangier Street. The existing building was designed as a bus depot with vehicular entrances on Bransty Row and the adjacent side streets. The façade facing the harbour is entirely blank. Consequently, the site lacks any activity at street level.



Lack of activity at the quayside



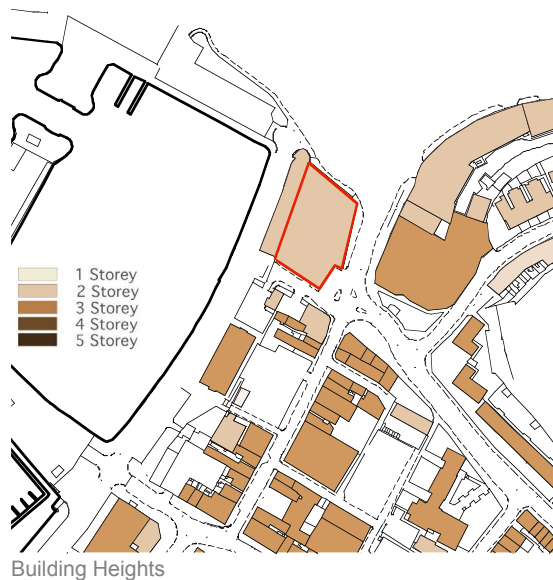
Building Usage Plan



Street Activity Plan

## Height and Massing

The town centre's buildings are primarily 3 storeys in height reflecting the Lowther Estates' aspirations for a town of substance and civic quality. This suited the warehouse and housing that made up most of the town in the 18th Century but subsequent uses, such as the bus depot, required tall single storey structures. In height terms, the bus depot differs little from the town's overall average building height. However in massing terms, there is a dramatic difference. The human scale of the Georgian town is replaced by the imposing proportions of the bus depot's vehicle entrances. The site backs onto the harbour, which has a number of structures taller than 3 storeys. The site would benefit from greater height on this frontage and this should be considered in any future redevelopment.



## Views and Vistas

The site occupies an extremely high profile location terminating views from George Street and Bransty Row – the main access to the town from the north. The site is also viewed from the outer harbour, the quayside and from the railway station. The site is an important gateway to the town and any redevelopment should be high quality.



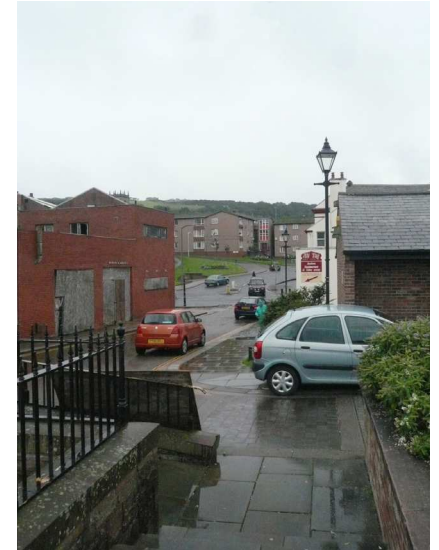
Existing building



Approach from the north



Termination of George Street



Site forms a gateway to the town



View from the Harbour

### Building Type

The building has a large floorplate that contrasts dramatically with the character of the town centre. The storey height is also noticeably greater, reflecting the building's former use. Access was via Bransty Row and the adjacent side street. The building is built up to the back of the footpath on Bransty Row with a setback at George Street corner. On the quayside where the railway sidings were originally located, the building is now fronted by a landscaped tree-lined strip of land. The majority of the site's buildings have flat parapeted roofs. The buildings to the south have double pitched roofs.

### Façade and Interface

The existing buildings lack any architectural quality and have a negative impact upon the street scene. The façade facing Bransty Row does help define the street edge, however the combination of the setback on the southeast corner and the low grade façade offers little to the quality of the street scene. At street level the frontage on Bransty Row has a number of vehicular entrances. Elsewhere the façade is blank. On the quayside the building has a blank façade which detracts from the quality and animation of the upgraded quayside.

### Details and Materials

The buildings on the site are built from a mix of red brick, concrete and harling. None of these are of particularly high quality and have aged particularly badly resulting in an eyesore that is at odds with the overall character of the Georgian town.

On the quayside, the tower portion of the wall is in stone – presumably a relic of the former boatyard that existed prior to the 1930s.

### SITE RESPONSES

- Repair the urban grain and seek good quality development on the site.
- Repair the line of Tangier Street/ Bransty Row and infill the forecourt to the southeast of the site.
- Introduce active frontages at ground level on all sides particularly on Bransty Row and the Millennium Promenade.
- Confine service access to the side street off Bransty Row.
- New buildings to be taken up to the back of footpaths.
- Northeast and southeast corners to exploit distant views from Bransty Row and George Street with emphasis upon height and detail.
- New buildings to be no less than 3 storeys in height.
- Heights greater than 3 storeys to be encouraged on the harbour frontage.
- Where heights exceed 3 storeys, the architectural quality should be particularly high and the overall form justified in urban design terms.
- Encourage high quality materials and details that enhance the character of the town centre.