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To:
Subject:

Ross Anthony
21 August 202
Development Control
Application Ref: 4/24/2268/OL1 - 46 LOWTHER STREET, WHITEHAVEN

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FAO: Sara Papaleo

Address: 46 LOWTHER STREET, WHITEHAVEN
Application Ref: 4/24/2268/OL1

Proposal: listed building consent for alterations comprising the replacement of rear basement door with a sash window, creation of front basement covered light-well with enlarged window. Alteration to the design and positioning of the main staircase and the re-introduction of an internal staircase to the basement. Internal basement refurbishment to return it to a habitable standard and the removal of a 1st floor wall.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is a consultee for Listed Building Consent applications, as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for notifying HB&P about the above application for listed building consent. HB&P have reviewed the documentation available and agree with the comments already provided by your conservation officer that the scheme, as proposed, would harm the special architectural interest of this heritage asset.

In support of your CO's comments, we refer you to Chapter 6 of the book *Whitehaven 1660 – 1800* by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England. P 87 provides discussion about the typical single width, two rooms deep plan form that was constructed in Whitehaven in the early 1700s, including the newel stair tower in the centre of the house and a rear stack to the rear wing (which isn't shown on the applicants plans?). The curved wall and recess in the basement is evidence of the original stair and this form of house and removal of the wall would harm our ability to understand and interpret the original structure. The text goes on to explain that the newel stair fell out of fashion and were replaced in most houses with straight stairs, in a similar manner to that which now exists at No 46. Like the curved wall is evidence of the original structure, the existing stair has significance in demonstrating how buildings were adapted as fashion changed, and the use of mahogany for the railing suggests this was a higher status dwelling at the time as well.

The only justification for replacing the stair is to create access to the basement, but both alterations would result in the loss of important historic building fabric and evidence of the original plan form and should be avoided.

In addition, we are concerned about the removal of the wall to the front first floor room to make it dual aspect. The loss of this wall would alter the original proportions and form of this room and the thickness of the wall suggests it was possibly originally an external wall.

We note and defer to your COs comments and advice about the appropriateness of using the cellar as habitable rooms. An options appraisal investigating alternative locations for a stair to access the basement may be needed.

Policy: Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023), particularly paragraph 205, that states: 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Recommendation: Withdrawal or submission of amended plans.

Regards

Ross Anthony

Case Work



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Historic Buildings & Places is the working name of the Ancient Monuments Society, a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 209605). It is one of the National Amenity Societies and a consultee on Listed Building Consent applications as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are concerned with historic assets of all types and all ages, including planning applications affecting historic buildings in conservation areas and undesignated heritage.