

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Refurbishment & Extension to

148 Queen Street | Whitehaven | Cumbria |
CA28 7AW

Whitehaven Town Council

Prepared by:

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Contents

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Use
3.0	Access
4.0	Scale, Appearance + amount
5.0	Layout

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with all information and drawings included as part of the submission of the Planning Application and Conservation Consent for the creation of former Whitehaven News building, 146 Queen street, to the new Whitehaven Town Council Head Quarters with additional lease start-up office spaces to the Second Floor.

1.2 The purpose of the statement is to explain the client's needs, to highlight the design development process and to provide background information in relation to the proposals.

1.3 The property is owned by Whitehaven Town Council and is intended to offer public facing facilities, meeting rooms and public exhibitions spaces, council admin and chambers, as well as leased offices to the Second Floor.

1.3 The report relates to the needs of the organisation to enable the building to become wheelchair accessible, in order to provide an inclusive facility available for all users and council operatives alike.

1.4 The property falls within the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area (as shown in the map opposite).

Extract map from Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Management Plan.



Dashed red line shows extent of Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area
Orange marker indicates approx. position of 146 Queens Street

2.0 Use

2.1 The property is a three-storey corner property, located on the corner of Queen Street and Roper Street.

2.2 The building is one building but from structural review and extent of alterations it appears that the property was originally divided into four separate properties. It is suspected that the Roper street portion was possibly the main corner property plus a further adjoining property to Roper Street which is now subdivided and not in ownership.

2.3 It is suspected that the property was constructed approx. 18th Century at the time of Whitehaven's development as a port. The architectural style and construction type supports this theory.

2.4 The property has been used as a newspaper office until recently, with the Whitehaven News only fairly recently vacating the building.

2.5 The Building is not considered to be Listed but sits within the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area. The adjoining building to the right hand side is Grade II Listed. The building also sits within an area with multiple Listed Buildings.

2.6 The building is presently occupied by a limited amount of Council operatives, utilising the GF only. The building as it stands is unfit for purpose as it offers no inclusive access even to the ground floor. The building is prone to water leaks due to roof coverings nearing end of life.

2.8 The building also suffers from inadequate services and further to a Mechanical and Electrical services survey much of the existing has been found to require complete renewal to meet current regulations and standards to fulfil intend use, including services supply infrastructure such as power, gas and water.

2.9 The building was vacant for a few years prior to Whitehaven Town Council purchase and it would appear regularised maintenance has not been progressed for sometime. Vegetation is evident to many rainwater goods, cracking and ponding water is evident to the rear carpark. Render in places is cracked and the windows are showing signs of age, decay and water ingress. The building is also known to be suffering from water ingress from differing parts of the building both the main roof and rear offshoot extensions / lean to roof are susceptible to ongoing maintenance works to offer short term fixes.

2.10 The rear courtyard is surrounded by neighbouring buildings / party walls some of which are in poor condition and require maintenance.

2.11 The proposed use of the building as Whitehaven Town Council looks to revitalise and modernise an existing dilapidated building. The proposals look to enhance the property whilst remaining sensitive to its historic values.

2.0 Use

2.12 The small 10sqm single storey rear extension is intended to be the new entrance lobby to provide level accessibility into the property and to prevent heat loss. The entrance offers new reception and meeting room facilities immediate to the new entrance

2.13 The rear courtyard provides low gradient (to match existing topography) and level access to the building. The courtyard will include raised planters and seating to welcome users and encourage connection to external environment + building alike.

2.14 The property will include the following (refer to proposed layouts for further information):

Ground Floor:

- Entrance draft lobby
- Reception
- Meeting Rooms
- Accessible WC + toilet
- Open plan admin office
- Exhibition space (public)
- Cleaners cupboard

-Councillors offices (x2)

-Talking News Papers

First Floor:

- Training Room / flexible event space
- Council Chamber / flexible event space
- Meeting Room
- Accessible WC + additional toilet
- Cleaners cupboard
- X2 meeting rooms
- Store

Second Floor

- x5 Start up Offices
- Accessible WC
- Break out space
- Store

Courtyard

- Seating, planting, Level access entry to building

3.0 Access

3.1 The site is fairly level but the existing main entrance includes stepped access. It is unachievable to grade the existing public pavement or to lower the ground floor level of the building due to the existing floor construction (beam and block). The solution is to change the main access point to the property utilising the natural fall / topography of the site. The rear courtyard will allow level access to suit Approved Doc M and to satisfy Equalities Act 2010.

3.2 A new platform lift is to be installed to the entrance level / circulation space to offer accessibility to all levels including lower ground level, first floor and second floor (not basement – not to be used for accommodation purposes).

3.3 Side fire exit doors (to Roper Street) are to remain stepped (as existing – not to be altered due to existing pavement level difference) New handrails to be added to steps – black powder coated ironmongery to blend with surroundings.

3.4 The reception desk will incorporate a lowered section for wheelchair uses.

3.5 Accessible (Approved Document –Part M compliant) toilets are to be installed to each floor level. There is inappropriate space available to accommodate a changing places or shower room.

3.6 The planning application will meet Policy CL1 and ensures it is inclusive and accessible to all.

3.7 Wayfinding signage is to be included throughout the building to assist navigation to and within the building.

3.8 A full fire strategy including new fire alarm system is to be installed to current regulations, Fire Doors and fire resistant construction is to be included to stair cores. Disabled Refuge points are to be incorporated on each level within compartmented, fire resistant stair wells.

3.9 The building will be subject to a full new intruder alarm and security system. New external doors and windows will be in Secure doorsets and windows to British Standards publication PAS 24:2012

3.10 The new entrance doors will be fully automated and glazing will include manifestation to current regulations to avoid accidental collision.

3.11 The entrance will be well light with new discrete amenity lighting from the access underpass to the courtyard.

3.12 Proposals have been developed with Copeland Council's Conservation Area Design Guide and current planning legislation.

4.0 Scale, Appearance and Amount

4.1 The proposed development offers little significant change to the frontage of the property to Queen Street and Roper Street. New windows, render and roofing is to be renewed to match existing (offering a sensitive refurbishment respectful of the existing building).

4.2 The rear dilapidated yard is to become a formalised level access courtyard with new high quality paving to be in keeping with the existing building.

4.3 The new modern glazed entrance has been carefully located to prevent disturbance to the existing high quality prime elevations of the property.

4.4 Existing sign fascia board to remain as existing, to be the same size and proportion in keeping with traditional shop frontage. The new signage is to be a direct replacement of existing, subtle and in keeping with horizontal rhythm of the building, retaining proportions and emphasis on vertical elevation (rather than new larger / dominant horizontal banding). The Signage lettering is to be the same scale and character of existing. Shallow raised lettering is to be installed to existing signage board. No illumination is intended to the signage.

4.5 Much of the works includes refurbishment and maintenance type works to the external envelope of the property including new roofing slate (to match existing), render (to match existing) and decoration of existing stonework. New feature colours are to be heritage type with muted pastels colours, all in strict accordance with the Copeland Conservation Area Design Guide.

4.6 The removal of the existing poorly constructed rear extension is considered to make a positive impact on the existing property. The new extension roof form looks to follow on from the existing former rear extension gable, negating the need for awkward hung gutters and subsequent maintenance and waterproofing issues.

4.7 The new roof form looks to replace an existing poorly constructed roof attributing to ongoing water ingress deterioration of the existing property.

4.8 The existing sliding sash windows are to be refurbished where possible and any new will be to match the existing.

4.9 The glazing to the rear extension windows and doors is to be purposefully modern aluminium double glazed units to meet modern Building Control standards providing sustainable use. The appearance and fenestration is a deliberate departure from the existing and original sash windows to clearly and distinctively depict the new extension as a later addition as to not detract from the original building. These proposals to the property are consistent with advice and the policies in the NPPF (formally PPS5).

5.0 Layout

5.1 See proposals, accessible level at new entrance and platform lift included to serve all levels. Formation of new Accessible toilets and meeting rooms to suit councils operation requirements.