



Heritage, Design and Access Statement *SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION*



Change of Use of Offices to C3 Residential Serviced Apartments, The
Old Customs House, West Strand, Whitehaven – 22 May 2022

Commentary :

The enclosed information address's questions raised by the Georgian Society and Conservation Officer at Copeland BC in respect of additional information submitted in support of both Planning and Listed Building Consent.

1.1 It is also still not clear whether the door opening between the entrance hall and apartment 2 which would be blocked, is an historic one, and whether it retains its original door and or doorcase.



View of internal doorway into the front of Apartment 2



Apartment 2 – Existing door into front room. This is a historic door opening, the door linings and architrave indicate this. The skirtings and doors and both modern and offer no loss of heritage from the building.



Photo of rear doorway into Apartment 2 from main hallway.



Internal view of rear doorway into Apartment 2

This is the retained door way into Apartment 2, it confirms this as modern doorway with torus softwood architraves, ply faced fire door and concrete lintol with modern brick infill panel over door

1.2 The Georgian Group raises concern that the doorcase of the 'front entrance door to Apartment 1' which is noted as original, is proposed to be removed with no indication made whether it is proposed to be returned.



Existing modern door screen to Apartment 1 to be removed – evidence of steel beam over – split in brickwork suggest some re-modelling – wall not clearly shown on original plans. Apartment 1 Flat Entrance doorway to left of photo is to be retained with new Fire door installed as this doorway opens on to a protected stairwell.

1.3 The Group wishes to register additional concern regarding the raising of the height of the rear extension to provide living accommodation for Apartment 4. The group notes that this proposal would involve the loss of 1no. historic window, to be converted into a door. The Georgian Group does not find the justification for this proposed loss of a historic window to be sufficiently convincing and is of the opinion that an alternative ordering of Apartment 4 would allow for the retention of the historic window.



Internal view of window indicating a modern raised cill to allow kitchen to be installed. Wooden timber beads to plasterwork remain and architrave to window reveal



Close up photo of rear window - Internal view confirms this is a modern factory made window with routed curved edges confirming this. Window is temporary boarded due to vandalism



Modern timber window replacement – softwood mock sash window with lower hung casement window, lean to slate roof below

The proposed works do see the removal of this historic window opening however this is replaced with a new sash window in a newly aligned outer leaf. In addition the works see the removal of the modern velux rooflight.

The existing timber window is not historic, the proposed works provide an external improvement to the building seeing the removal of a modern rooflight insertion and this is replaced with a traditional sliding sash window.

The conversion of the window to an internal door lining is appropriate and proportionate to the overall building and it's apparent external visual loss is overridden by the logical replacement with a new sash window on an elevation overlooked from a public car park.

1.4 On the second floor an additional window opening is shown in the rear wall of the 'as proposed drawing', and two new staircases shown inserted through the ceilings. The impact on historic fabric and on the historic planform of the building however requires further explanation

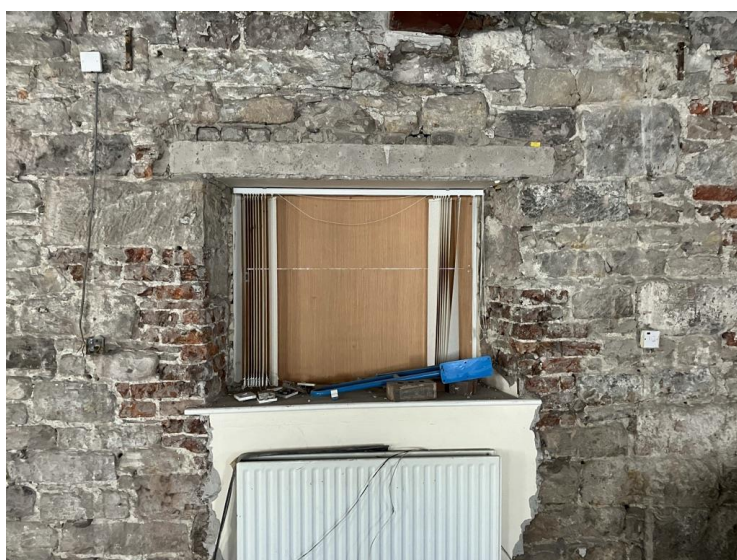


Location of attic stairs to right hand gable of existing roof structure.



Location of attic stairs to left hand section of second floor – stairs fitted between truss and former 'party wall'

The photographs demonstrate that the works in creation of the attic floors do not impede on the existing roofing structure or layout. The trusses have previously been strengthened and altered over time. The works generally on this floor level allow the exposure of the existing roof structures to be read and are no longer obscured behind modern suspended ceilings.



Existing modern window insertion at first floor to rear of building

The building have been altered or adapted over time and the proposal to insert an additional window in the second floor above this newer opening allows for the development of the building with time. The size and proportions of the windows are correct for this building and the enhancement of the rear elevation with the removal of the steel staircase offsets this variation in the building.

1.5 No information however has yet been provided about the fireplace in apartment 2.



Basement gable wall viewing towards adjacent property – Basement stonework indicates the alignment of two chimney stacks within the building which rise through three floors. Central infill of stone is referenced on upper two floors.



Rear half of front room in Apartment 2 ground floor, exposed brick aligns with chimney stack on first floor and basement.



Apartment 2 – assumed former fireplace location sat centrally between two existing chimney stacks and remains unaltered. Profile of two distinct chimney stacks to left and right hand side visible in plaster profile. No works are proposed to this chimney stack with the except of inserting an air brick for ventilation.



Chimney stack at first floor gable with central stack shown centrally between, and serves fireplace in ground floor of apartment 2.



Chimney stack in second floor rising to main stack on roof all built in brickwork

It is not proposed due to the location of the former fireplace within the new Apartment to open this up, it is assumed given the 'flat' wall profile that a no historic fireplace exists behind this.

1.6 The Group notes with severe concern that much of the plastering, ceilings and other architectural details has already been removed from the first and second floors without any appropriate appraisal of the historic or architectural significance of these having been provided.



Sample photograph of second floor attic level which reflected the majority of floors where existing plastered or lath and plastered ceilings had all been previously removed and timbers all covered with thermal quilt insulation



Thermal insulation removed from roof voids to allow inspection of the existing timbers



Previous steel strengthening works to roof trusses. Evidence of additional modern timber bracing also added to main trusses.



Modern steelwork and strengthening works to existing openings with new brickwork over.



First floor ceilings with previously installed steel strengthening by previous building owner. This also indicates modern floor joists and floor boards installed within the last 50 years.



Strengthening works to existing timber beams



Gypsum based modern plaster and plasterboard removed from external walls.

Assessing Significance of Historic Buildings

The works proposed and completed by the client during Covid lockdown have allowed the existing building to be opened up and modern insertions have been removed. Where existing historic features exist these have been retained in situ.

The above information now allows for the Georgian Society to assess the overall project and provides specific responses to the items raised during earlier consultations.