

LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE BLOCKING UP OF EXISTING SHOP FRONT WITH A WOODEN BOARD PAINTED TO MATCH THE EXTERNAL SHOP FRONT (RETROSPECTIVE)

Design and Access Statement

Introduction & Context

17 and 18 High Street are Grade II listed properties under list entry number 1086697. They were listed in December 1973 as part of list entry '13-20, High Street, 1, Union Street'. The description provided in the listing entry is as follows:

Description includes No 1 Union Street. Row of shops; late C19. Later alterations. Incised stucco with cornice over shop windows and sill bands to upper floors; eaves cornice. Hipped, Welsh slate, roof with corniced brick mid and end chimneys. 3 storeys. Eight 2-bay shops separated at ground level by panelled pilasters with acanthus capitals. C20 shop fronts. 1st floor windows in stucco surrounds with pediments (alternating 2 triangular, 2 segmental) carried on corbelled half-shafts. 2nd floor windows in stucco surrounds with splayed feet. 4-bay Union Street elevation similar, but segment-headed windows and a door to ground floor. Panel between 1st and 2nd bays on 1st floor carries entwined initials: D. & A.J.S. (?). Windows variously sash and C20 casements.

Listing NGR: NY0200315074

From a comment against the official list entry it is believed the properties were previously the local liberal rooms.

Figure 1 shows the full listed building with the properties comprising Ann Morgan Opticians highlighted. Ann Morgan Opticians is within two of the properties, number 17 and 18 High Street. The opticians shop occupies the ground floor of the properties. The first and second floor of number 17 is a flat with a separate rear entrance. The first and second floor of number 18 is used as storage and provides staff welfare facilities for the opticians.



Figure 1 - 13 - 20 High Street August 2022 with Ann Morgan Opticians highlighted (copyright Google)

Ann Morgan Opticians continues to occupy a historic building despite the maintenance costs this can pose to a small business. This is in direct agreement with item 5.3.17 of Copelands

Local Plan, to refurbish existing buildings when possible. Cleator Moor is a key service area as defined in the local plan and the practice provides an essential service to the local population.

Design

This retrospective application is for the removal of the door to number 17 High Street and replacement with a wooden board. See Appendix 1 for floor plans prior and following the works.

Internally to the property the two separate shops have been combined to form one larger floor space. This was approved on 11/15/2000 under application 4/00/0724/0 'LISTED BUILDING CONSENT TO FORM OPENING IN PARTY, WALL TO ENABLE GROUND FLOOR OF 17 HIGH STREET TO, BE USED AS EXTENSION TO OPTICIANS PREMISES'

When the internal works were completed the doorway to number 17 was blocked internally by a large display case. However, externally a 'door' remained although it was not accessible from the inside. Over the last few years there have been issues with vandalism and loitering in the unused doorway, figure 2 shows the blocked door which was clearly unused and the appearance encouraging vandalism. The door woodwork was also deteriorating and providing costly to maintain.

Although most of the vandalism occurring has been low level graffiti Ann Morgan Opticians has also been the subject of 2 burglaries. A large quantity of stock is stored in the property overnight therefore, ensuring security to the property is maintained is particularly important. Removal of the damaged door removes a potential route for thieves to attempt to access the business.



Figure 2 Doorway to number 17 High Street August 2022 (Copyright Google)

When reviewing the appearance of the shop front it became apparent that this existing door needed to either be replaced or removed. As it is not accessible from inside removal was considered the best option with the door replaced with a wooden board. The board was then painted in one colour to match the surrounding woodwork. Use of one board means if vandalism and graffiti continues it is easy for the board to be repainted to maintain the visual appeal of the wider building.

Figure 3 shows the building prior to improvement works, with the unused door. Figure 4 shows the door replaced with a wooden board which has then been painted to match the rest of the shop front. Note the missing letters in the signage were also caused by vandalism and are currently in the process of being replaced.



Figure 3 Shop Front in Aug 2022 prior to doorway alterations (copyright Google)



Figure 4 Shop Front in Nov 2025 after doorway alterations (copyright Google)

The wooden board has been painted to match the surrounding woodwork which enhances the appearance of the listed property when compared to the previous doorway. A neutral magnolia has been selected as this compliments the green features around the shop front. Magnolia paint is also easy to repaint when damaged or graffitied. Figure 5 shows the full listed property with the boarded doorway, demonstrating that the works completed suit the wider appearance of the building.



Figure 5 Photo of full listed building with the doorway alterations. (copyright Google)

External Access

Ann Morgan Opticians is accessed via the door of property number 18 from the pavement. This is a step free access which allows wheelchair access into the building. Ann Morgan Opticians is regularly used by those with limited mobility and wheelchair users. The doorway is 0.78m wide allowing adequate space for users to enter the building. Blue badge holders can park temporarily directly outside of the building allowing minimal walking distance to reach the property. Inside the property all the shop floor space between number 17 and 18 is step free, there is also step free access into both eye testing rooms. Chairs are provided just inside of the entrance doorway.

The removal of this doorway doesn't impact access to the property at all. Access was already limited to the doorway of number 18 due to a large display area being behind the door to number 17. It is not feasible to have two doors to access the shop due to the number of thefts the business has experienced. Glasses, particularly high value sunglasses, are an easy target for quick thefts. By limiting access to one doorway members of staff at the reception desk can monitor those entering and exiting the building.

In terms of fire escape routes from the building there are two alternative exits to the rear of the property and the property has recently passed a fire risk assessment.

Heritage Impact Assessment

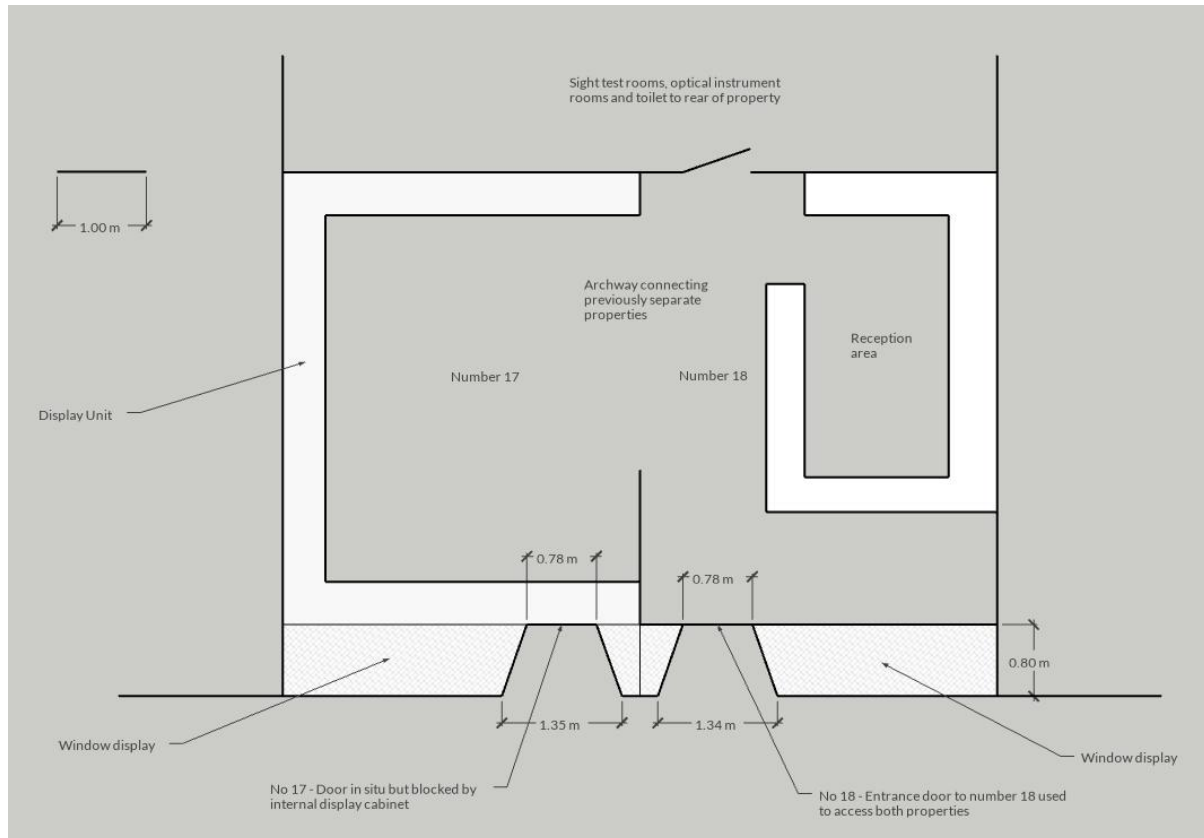
The changes made do not impact any of the specific features outlined in the listed building entry, as described in the introduction. The wooden board was selected to match the appearance of the surrounding property; it has been painted in a neutral magnolia paint in keeping with surrounding buildings and to provide a consistent appearance across the shop front of both 17 and 18 High Street. This alteration causes no harm to the heritage of the listed building, we believe it provides an improved external appearance.

Consultation

Public consultation was not undertaken due to the minor nature of the works. Staff employed by the business and a local builder were consulted when agreeing the preferred way forward.

Appendix 1

Floor Plan Prior to Works



Floor plan following Completion of the Works

