Flood Risk Assessment – 74 Market Place, Whitehaven

Planning Application Reference: 4/26/2166/0F1

Proposal:

Conversion of existing second floor to form three residential flats

1. Site and Development Description

Site Address: 74 Market Place, Whitehaven, Cumbria

Existing Use: Ground floor retail with upper-floor commercial/office space

Proposed Development: Internal conversion of the second floor to create three self-contained residential flats. No external works, no change to footprint, and no alteration to ground levels.

Flood Vulnerability Classification: *More Vulnerable* (Residential - NPPF Flood Risk and Coastal Change PPG).

2. Flood Risk Context

2.1 Strategic Setting

Whitehaven town centre is identified within Copeland's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as being influenced by tidal/coastal flooding associated with the harbour, combined with surface water pathways in dense urban areas.

2.2 Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning

The site lies within an area affected by tidal/coastal flood mapping. Ground floor levels may fall within Flood Zone 2 or 3. The second floor sits significantly above predicted flood levels.

2.3 Requirement for FRA

A site-specific FRA is required due to:

- Residential (More Vulnerable) use in an area affected by EA flood mapping.
- Change of use within an existing building.
- Need to demonstrate safe occupation and no increase in flood risk elsewhere.

3. Assessment of Flood Risk

3.1 Tidal and Coastal Flooding

- Primary flood source is tidal/coastal flooding from Whitehaven Harbour.
- Flood depths and hazard are greatest at ground level.
- The proposed second-floor flats are **well above** predicted flood levels and are not at risk of direct inundation.

3.2 Surface Water Flooding

- Surface water ponding may occur on Market Place during intense rainfall.
- This affects ground-floor access only; the second floor remains unaffected.

3.3 Groundwater and Sewer Flooding

- Groundwater risk is low in this urban coastal setting.
- Sewer surcharge may occur in extreme events but would affect lower levels only.
- No changes to drainage arrangements are proposed.

4. Sequential and Exception Tests

4.1 Sequential Test

The proposal is a change of use within an existing town-centre building. There are no realistic alternative sites for upper-floor residential accommodation in lower-risk zones. The Sequential Test is considered satisfied.

4.2 Exception Test

If Flood Zone 3 applies, the Exception Test may be required. The proposal meets both limbs:

- **Wider sustainability benefits:** Town-centre regeneration, housing delivery, reuse of existing building fabric.
- **Safety:** Second-floor accommodation is safe for its lifetime with appropriate emergency planning.

5. Flood Risk Mitigation Measures

5.1 Finished Floor Levels

- Existing second-floor levels retained; these are significantly above predicted flood levels.

5.2 Building Resilience

- No ground-floor residential use.
- Any future ground-floor works should incorporate flood-resilient materials and raised services.

5.3 Access, Egress and Emergency Planning

- Access is via an existing stairwell from Market Place.
- In extreme events, residents should **not** evacuate through floodwaters.
- A Flood Emergency Plan will be provided, including:
    - Registration for EA flood warnings (where available).
    - Safe refuge on upper floors.
    - Emergency contact information.
    - Clear instructions not to enter floodwater.

5.4 Drainage

- No increase in impermeable area.
- Existing roof and drainage arrangements unchanged.
- Foul drainage connection remains to the public sewer.

6. Impact on Flood Risk Elsewhere

- No change to building footprint or ground levels.
- No displacement of floodwater.
- No alteration of overland flow paths.
- No increase in run-off rates or volumes.

  Conclusion: The development does **not** increase flood risk elsewhere.

7. Overall Conclusions

- The proposed second-floor residential conversion is **safe**, with no direct flood risk to the accommodation.
- Residual risk relates only to access/egress during extreme events and is manageable through a Flood Emergency Plan.
- The proposal complies with NPPF flood-risk requirements and Copeland Local Plan policy.
- The development does not increase flood risk on or off site.