

PROPOSED NEW GLAZED DOORS AND FULL GLAZED BALCONY TO REPLACE DEFECTIVE ORIEL WINDOWS TO THE FRONT FACADE OF HARBOURSIDE FLATS WEST STRAND WHITEHAVEN

HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE NATURE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The building occupies a prominent location overlooking the harbour in Whitehaven, adjacent to the Old Customs Building.

Formerly occupied by Provision Merchants (Dobson and Musgrave, refer to photograph), when they closed it was empty for many years, and then converted in to residential apartments some thirty years ago.

It is a Grade 2 listed building.

THE FORM AND MATERIALS OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The building consists of a large four storey structure located in an infill block overlooking West Strand. Externally rendered walls with a slate roof, and timber windows are used throughout.

Strong features of a vertical emphasis are evident where the Oriel windows on each floor, are located where the old service access doors were in evidence on the Dobson and Musgrave building.

It fits in well with existing buildings on the Strand, and some of the adjoining buildings are listed (Old Customs House).

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ASSET

It is a building listed because of its heritage and history linking it to the old port of Whitehaven. It is a good example of a former large commercial building, with strong characteristics and features (refer to old photograph), which were worthy of recording.

THE PROPOSED WORKS

The building requires repairs and maintenance to the external fabric, which has suffered due to the exposed location and closeness to the salt air from the sea. The Oriel windows, are thermally inefficient, have defective timber sections which require replacement, and repainting, and they allow water ingress in to the rooms internally. They are simply "not fit for purpose".

They also do not allow alot of natural light in to the room behind because they are narrow and the existing opening on the front wall, behind the Oriel, is small.

(Refer to photographs showing the front facade as existing).

It is proposed to remove the Oriel windows on four floors completely.

No alteration is proposed to the structure of the building or the front wall, all existing openings are retained.

It is proposed to install a pair of full glazed doors into the room, which would be thermally efficient, retain heat and improve the appearance of the building.

In front of these doors on the footprint of the old Oriel window, would be a small balcony. Enclosing this balcony would be a full glazed balustrade system (such as the IQ type or similar approved). The full glazed system allows the building behind to be seen without any interference by posts or handrails. The Glass simply sits in a channel and all one sees is the line along the height of the balustrade. It is a design which would suit this location and this building and would not detract from the overall features. The new doors would replicate the original vertical features of the service doors on the old building. The proposals would improve the front facade of the building and replace the Oriel windows which are no longer suitable, for the reasons as stated above.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

Except for the change of use to residential from former commercial building, no planning applications have been made in connection with the building.

THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS ON THE ASSET

The proposed works will NOT affect the significance of the heritage asset. It will improve it. It does not conceal features, but it will emphasise the old vertical service doors shown in the earlier photographs.

The impact of the introduction of double doors, a small balcony and the full glazed balustrade system will have a minimal effect on the asset's character and setting, in fact it will improve it, for the reasons as set out in this statement.

We can justify the works because urgent replacement of the Oriel windows is required, and it seemed sensible to look at the overall building facade, to consider if by removing the Oriel windows, it would improve the asset.

We therefore consider that it will greatly improve the character and setting of the asset for the reasons given.

PRESERVING OR ENHANCING THE HERITAGE ASSET

The proposed works better reveal and enhance the significance of the heritage asset by their introduction.

It will improve the front elevation to West Strand of the building without any doubt. It will make it look better.

It will also highlight characteristics previously hidden by the Orel windows, (ie the vertical existing openings).

RL

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