Listed Building Consent

Design & Access Statement

(Rev B)

46 Lowther Street, Whitehaven

Listed Building Consent Application 4/24/2268/0L1

INTRODUCTION

This statement accompanies a Listed Building Consent planning application for minor internal alterations to 46 Lowther Street, Whitehaven.

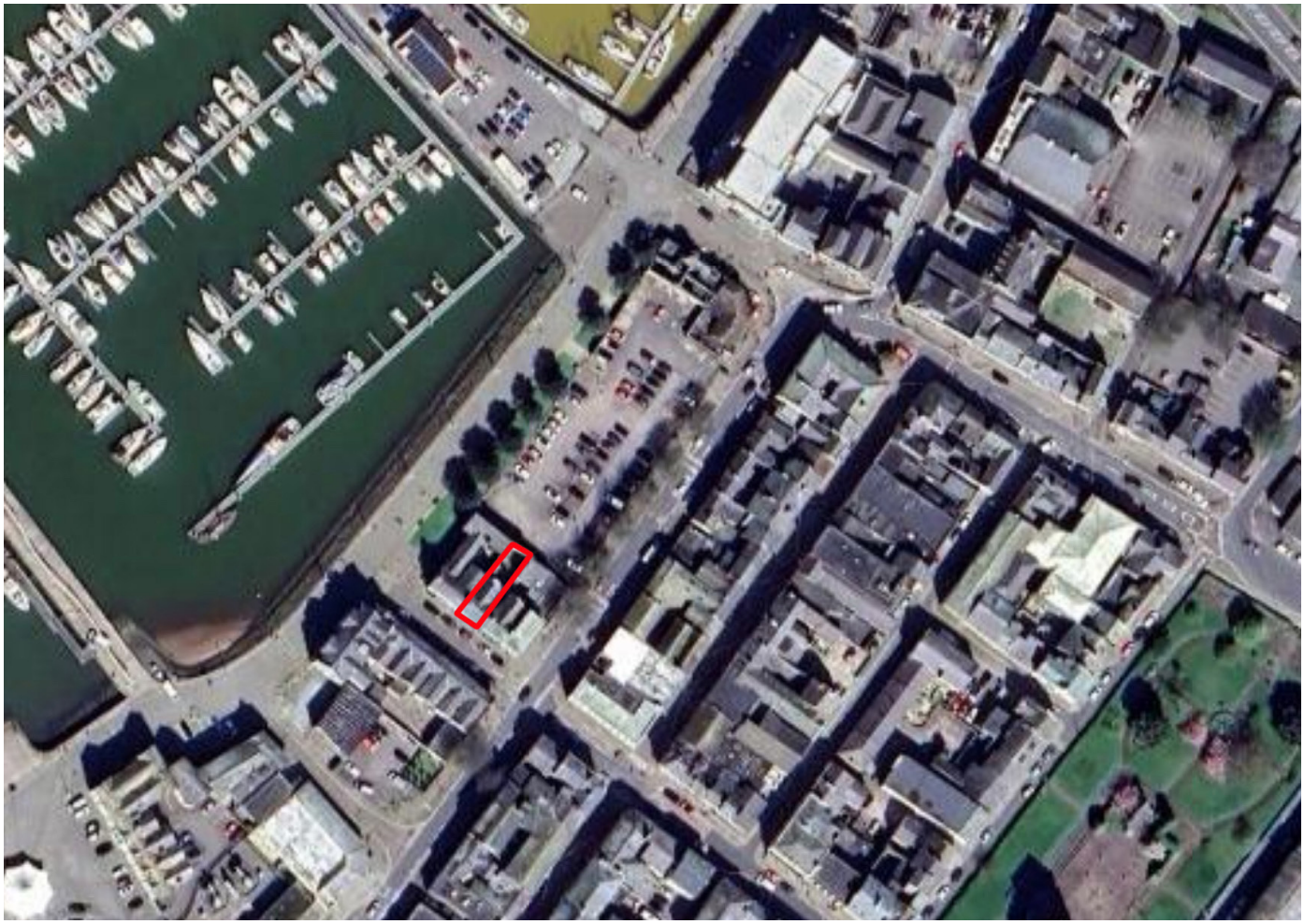
AIM
The proposed improvements are to enhance the usability of the property and improving design quality of the locality.

The proposed development has been designed with careful regard to the Listed Building, its character, material qualities and historical context.

We believe that this Statement, which accompanies this application, demonstrates that the proposed development would be entirely acceptable in planning conservation terms.

SOUTH NORTH GROUP

46 Lowther Street Front Elevation



46 Lowther Street Location

Design Amendment Summary

Following re-consultation comments regarding the proposals for this application, the following design amendments have been made;

1. The proposed internal basement staircase has been relocated to preserve the internal fabric of the basement. It is proposed for the existing lean-to at the rear side of the property to de demolished and rebuilt with a rendered insulated cavity wall construction. This area is to be excavated to form the new basment stair.

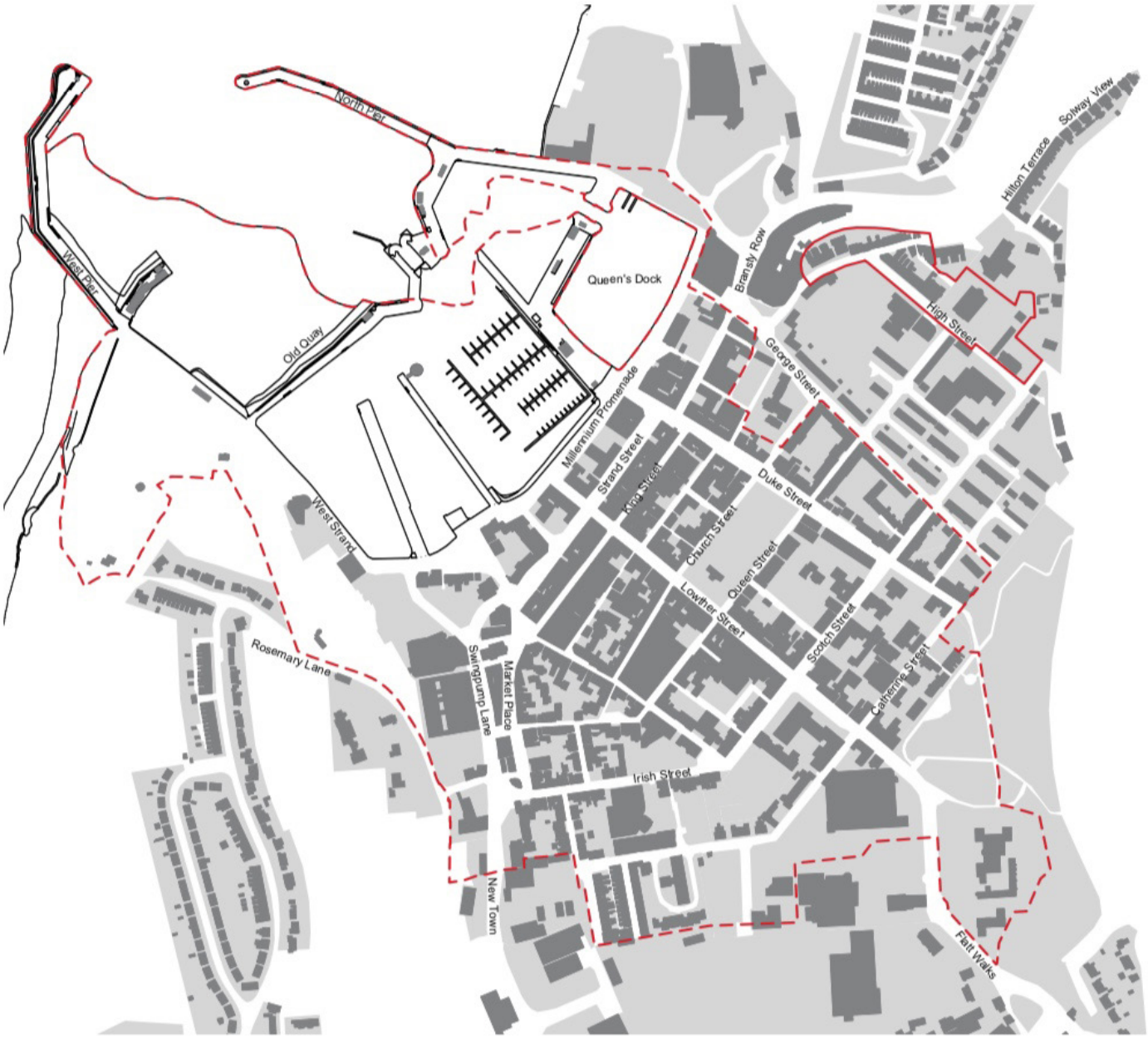
2. Further technical information is provided within this document to justify the proposed basement tanking system.

3. The 1st Floor partion wall is retained in this latest design revision. It is proposed for a new structural opening to be formed in the wall, creating double doors from the main living room to the proposed study.

4. The new basement stair enclossure is to be extended to first floor level, to create the ensuite for Bedroom 3. Listed building consent has been granted for the creation of an ensuite facility within the existing envelope of bedroom 3. It is felt that this latest proposal retains the original size and character of the room by locating the ensuite within a small side extension.

5. Further Justification and design information is provided concerning the replacement of the existing staircase.

Whitehaven Conservation Area Map



Location of Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas

46 Lowther Street Listed Building Details

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1086763
Date first listed: 13-Sep-1972
List Entry Name: 44-47, LOWTHER STREET
Statutory Address 1: 44-47, LOWTHER STREET

Details

LOWTHER STREET 1. 1814 (North East Side) Nos 44 to 47 (consec) NX 9718 SW 6/79
II GV

2. C18. Similar in style to Nos 39 to 42 (consec) but simpler in detail. 3 storeys, stuccoed. Nos 44 and 45 are identical, with inset doors in moulded openings, 1 sash window on ground floor and 2 on each upper floor. No 46
has a panelled door up 3 steps with fanlight, in moulded doorcase with detached pediment, and a triple sash window on each floor. No 47 has a panelled door up 3 steps, with round-headed fanlight, in a round moulded arch on consoles, and 2 sash windows on each floor.
Nos 44 to 48 (consec) and Nos 37 to 42 (consec) form a group.

46 Lowther Street Listed Building Consent Planning Application

Introduction

46 Lowther Street is a Grade II Listed Building and is located within the Whitehaven Conservation area.

Proposals

Externally, a Light-well is to be created to the Front Basement window, this will allow for the existing basement window to be larger, providing increased natural light and ventilation into the front basement room. 47 Lowther street features 2 such light-wells to the front, the proposed detailing and materials will match those existing at number 47. The replacement window will be a Timber Sash Window, finished in white, to match existing.

To the rear of the property there is an existing external staircase leading to a timber doorway that provides access to the Basement. This stairwell is covered by a lift-able timber hatch. It is proposed to remove the timber hatch and replace the door with a Timber Sash Window, finished in white, to match existing. It is proposed for light-well to also be enlarged, with a rendered retaining wall. The existing steps will be retained as a potential means of escape.

Internally, at first floor level, a doorway is created between the office/study and the main living space for the dwelling.

Figure 48, later in this document, provides a historical plan for 47 Lowther street, it is thought that 46 Lowther street was once similar. Originally there was an internal staircase down to the Basement, but this has been removed at some point and nothing remains of the stairs. It is proposed to reinstate an internal staircase to the basement and for the basement to be refurbished bringing it to a habitable standard and creating 2x ensuite bedrooms. The original basement stair entered into the front room of the property at ground floor, however with modern building regulations it is required that a basement staircase for a dwelling leads to a fire protected exit. The new staircase has been designed to have minimal impact and harm to the existing building fabric.

The main staircase of the property is also to be remodelled. The existing staircase is not original, or in the original location and the stairs provide little feature or character to the property, with the exception of the hardwood handrail that does provide a somewhat pleasing curved finish.

The new staircase will be closer to the location of the original stair and has a wide spiral design, this creates the opportunity to enhance the internal character of the property. The new stair will also feature white painted timber spindles with a curved timber handrail.

Existing Situation

There are few noteworthy features to the existing building interior, the original fireplaces have largely been removed and wall coping and skirting are non-period relatively recent interventions. Most of the internal doors are 6 panel timber doors but are a mixture of stained timber and white painted doors. The exception to this being the existing kitchen door that is a more recent glass panel door, it is proposed to replace this door with a 6 panel door finished in white and for all of the internal doors to be painted in a white gloss paint finish.

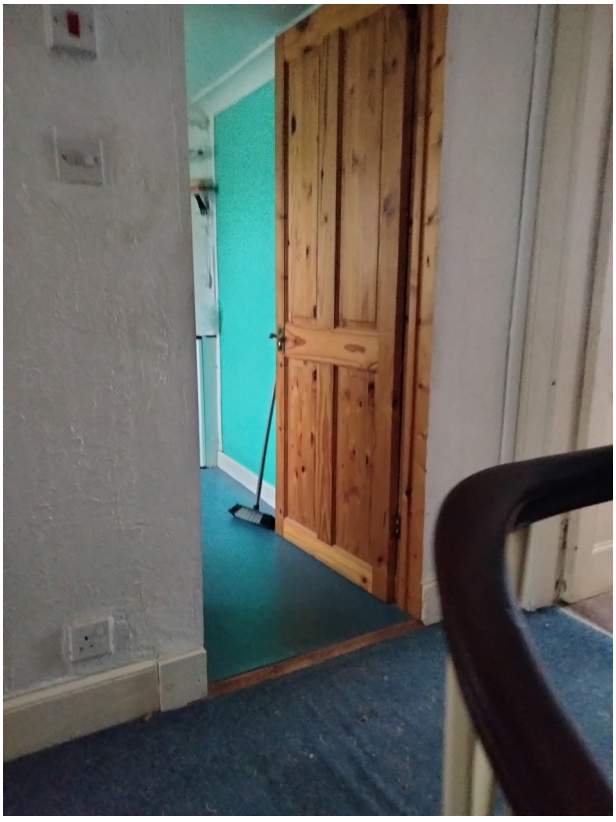
The existing staircase features a Mahogany handrail.

Ground Floor Front Room

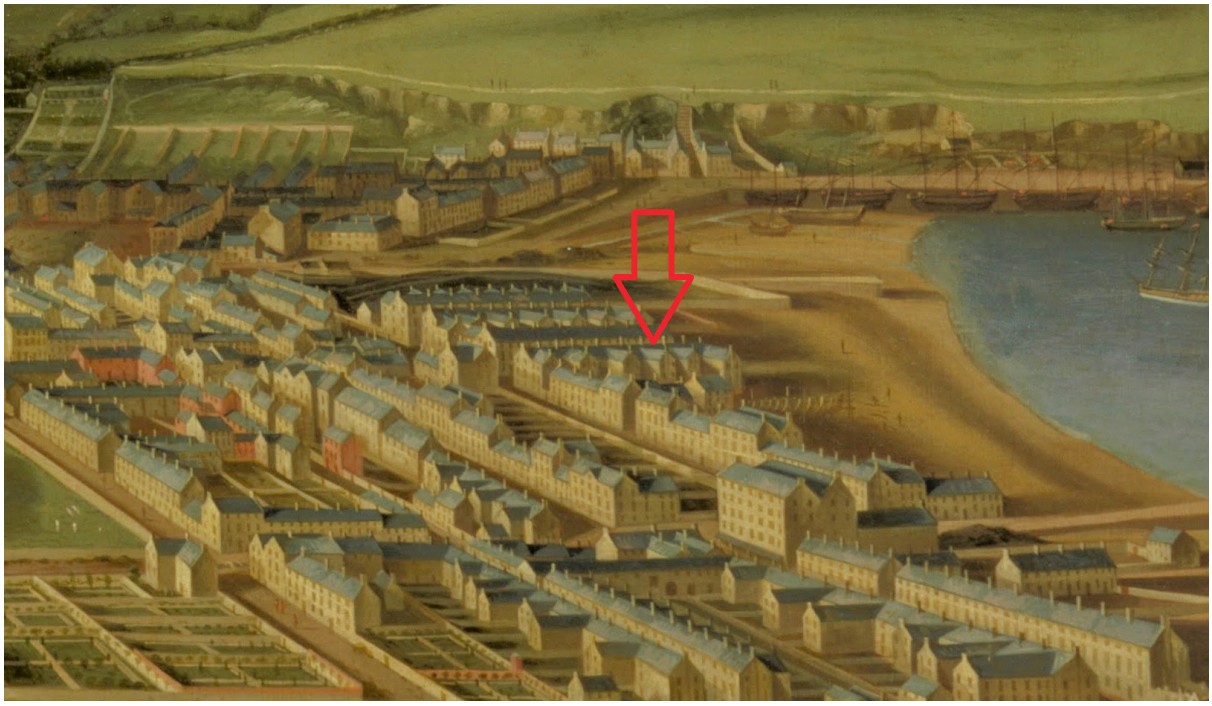
It is proposed to remove the non-period fireplace.

Existing Staircase Handrail

First Floor Front Room Door



First Floor Bathroom Door



Historical Context

New Lowther Street was developed in the early 18th century, with land reclaimed from the foreshore. Until that point – for the first decades of modern Whitehaven's existence – Strand Street was the closest point to the sea and was bounded by a tidal slope of mud and sand. You can see this in the Pellin map of 1695 and the continuation of the buildings on King Street, which effectively blocked the view of the harbour from the Flatt (later Whitehaven Castle).

New Lowther Street would have likely been built in around 1717. About when Mark Lane dated from, which was nearby and parallel to New Lowther Street, but which was later covered over by a building called Mark House in the 1960s. This was demolished in about 2010, and the site, currently a temporary car park between the "Black House" and remains of the late Victorian Bath House on the corner of Duke Street and the Promenade, informally retains the name "the Mark House site".

New Lowther Street was a consequence of deregulation and the granting of cheap leases by Sir James Lowther, son of Sir John (d. 1706) who had been instrumental in outlining most of Whitehaven's early development plan and principles. New Lowther Street's houses were well liked by sea captains, it being a convenient location for them to keep an eye on their ships as well as the warehouses that made up a large proportion of the buildings between Strand Street at the harbour-side.

From the Matthias Read painting of 1736 (above, with arrow indicating 46), painted when the houses were less than twenty years old, we can see that this row was all originally built with projecting rear wings. A form typical of early-18th century Whitehaven, which appears to be the case from the painting, was for a single-cell front with a newel (spiral) stair behind it, past which was accessed a wing containing a second cell, heated by a fireplace and stack at the gable end. The rear wings at New Lowther Street all appear to have been lost, but there is a feature in the cellar that appears to be the location of the original spiral stair. By the time of the Howard map of 1790, it appears that these rear wings had already been heavily modified or removed, and the whole area is densely overbuilt. You will note from the map and the painting that the row of buildings was at that time longer than it is now. This is because Strand Street was widened – I think in the 1960s – at which time the end buildings were demolished.

The date of 46 Lowther Street is given as c.1720 by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England, book Whitehaven 1660-1800 by Sylvia Collier and Sarah Pearson. The site was granted to an Anthony Borrowdale, mason, on the 16th April 1715. The site included space for three houses, and was spilt up by 1729, when the house was owned by a mariner named John Barrow. His widow occupied the house in 1762, and in 1770 it was let to a John Steel, who paid tax on ten windows. The original front door opened straight into the front room, and this was revealed when the render was removed in 1979. The building was altered in the 19th century – the doorway into the ginnel, the mullioned front windows and the staircase date from then.

The next-door house, Number 47 (plan below), dates from about the same time and is to a similar design although the original site appears to have been granted to a joiner named Thomas Jackson, rather than Anthony Borrowdale, on 15th Dec 1709. In this, it appears from the front that there is no ginnel to the rear courtyard, but in fact it originally shared the passage at 46, and later the yard access shifted to inside the house, behind the front cell. This house featured a newel stair, the remains of which are still visible in the cellar, but this was replaced in the mid-18th century with a closed-string transverse stair, as can be seen in the plan. Probably the same happened at 46. Presumably the revised ginnel arrangement at 47 dates from the same time its staircase was reconfigured.

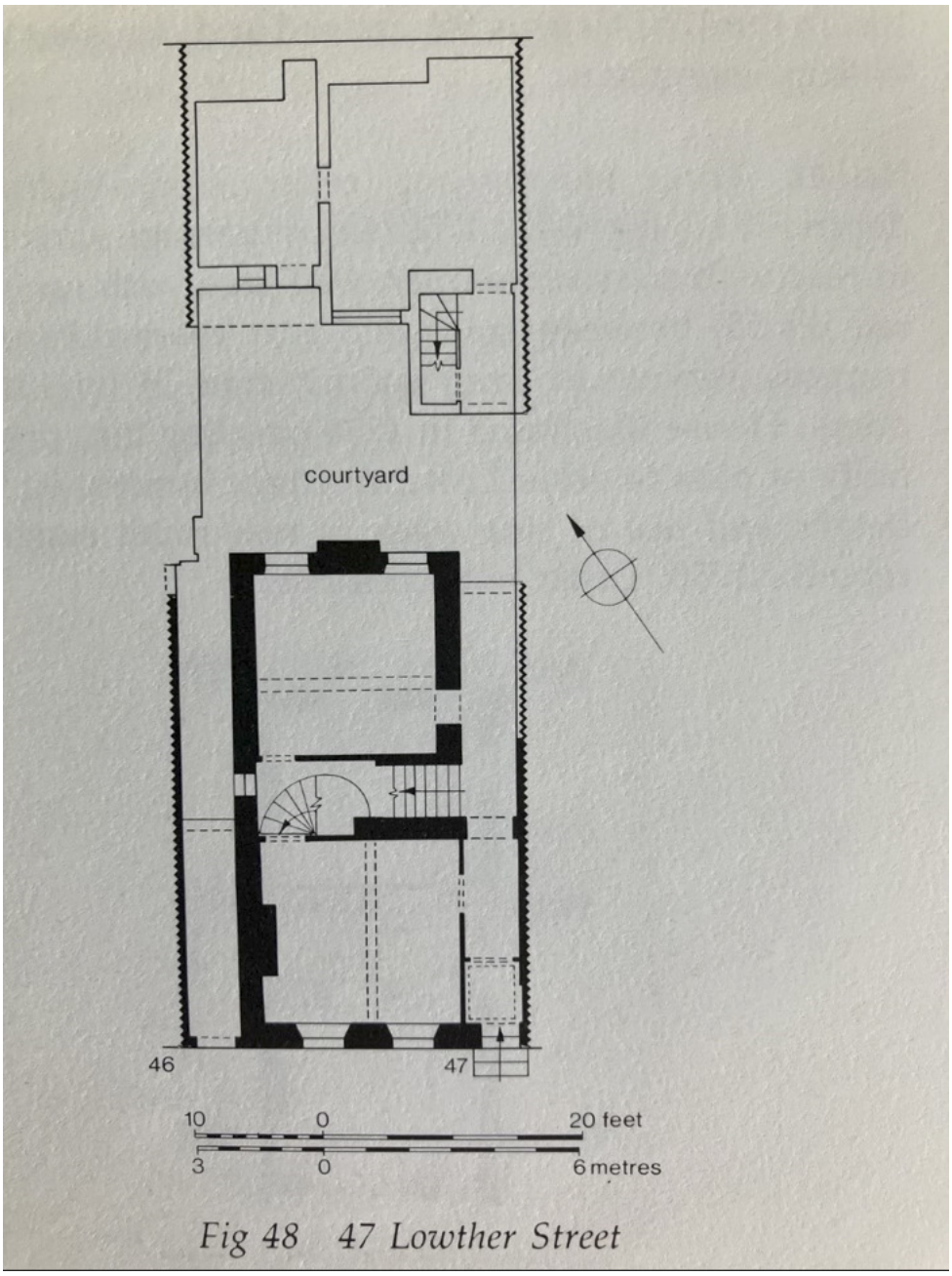


Fig 48 47 Lowther Street

Thanks to Sammy Woodford, Conservation and Design Officer for providing comprehensive historical context

Heritage Statement

The proposed internal alterations will enhance the buildings character and the improvements will bring the building to modern standards and provide increased accessibility use for the rooms. The circulation around the property and between rooms is improved.

The proposed detailing of the front and rear basement windows is in-keeping with the buildings character and appearance and again will improve the use-ability of the property.

The proposed location for the new basement staircase has been designed to have minimal impact to the existing fabric of the building. The internal layout of the basement largely remaining as existing, a new doorway to the new excavated staircase is formed and a section of internal wall is removed to facilitate the creation of the en-suite to the rear bedroom.

Listed building consent has been approved for the creation of an en-suite within bedroom 3, these latest proposals create a small side extension above the new basement stair location to create the en-suite for bedroom 3. This preserves the original size and character of bedroom 3 and is considered a less harmful intervention than that which is approved.

At first floor level it was initially proposed to remove an original partition wall to link the proposed study to the main living room. On reflection a less harmful and sensitive approach is to link these rooms with a traditional double door opening through the partition wall. This approach is more in-keeping with the character of the property and preserves the dimensional arrangement of rooms as originally intended.

It is proposed for the existing staircase to be removed and replaced. The existing staircase is not original to the property and is thought to be dated sometime in the 19thC. Besides the hardwood hard-rail, the staircase has little heritage value. The new staircase is to be detailed to match the existing stair, in a new configuration.

The owner of the property wishes to secure the long-term upkeep of the building. The redesign of the staircase allows for long term flexibility of use for the property and secures its viability. The proposals have been designed to provide a Dwelling house of a high standard. Additional to this, the attached indicative plans show how the proposed configuration can also provide an 8 Bedroom HMO, again to a high standard and given current market conditions and local demand, would provide sought after accommodation.

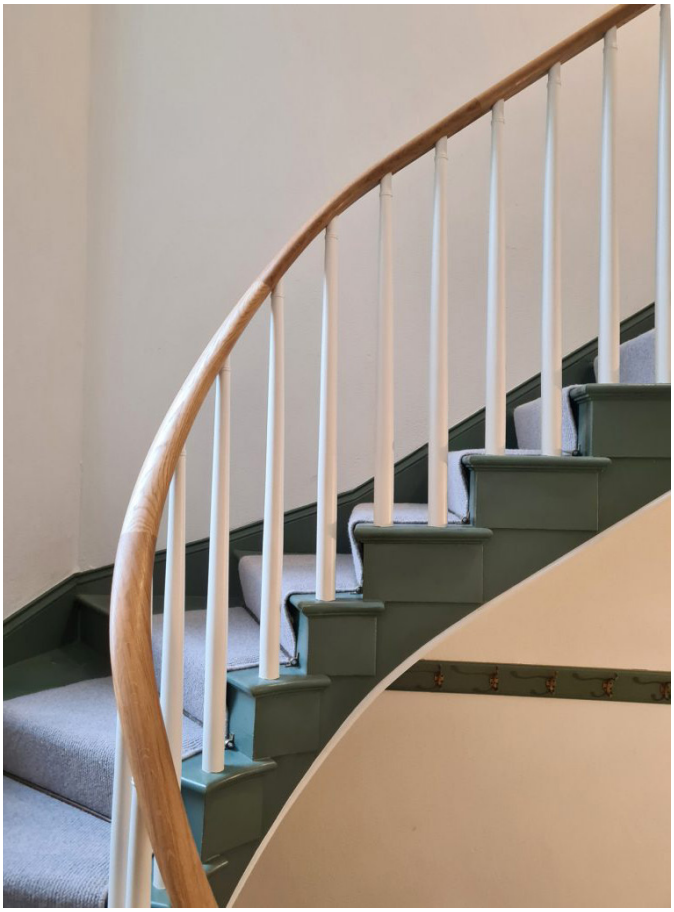
The proposed building configuration has also been designed to enable the future conversion of the property into residential flats, which again would be highly sought after in this location. The flexibility of the layout facilitating any conversion to also easily revert to a single dwelling, as existing.

Both 8 Bedroom HMO and 4x Residential Apartment uses would require and be subject to full planning approval. The client wishes to secure the Listed Building consent to facilitate these options before proceeding with a Full Planning Application for Flexible Use under Class V of the General Permitted Development Order, for these 3 types of use.

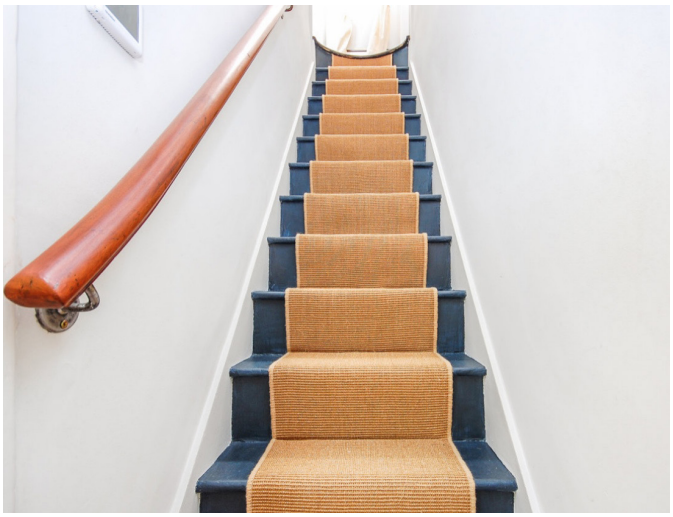
Any required alterations between these different uses is minimal and importantly for the preservation of the property does not require further alteration to the building fabric. It is therefore considered that any harm from the alteration of the stair is justified in securing the long-term viability and upkeep of the property.

Overall, we consider the proposals offer advantages and improvements that fully justify them to be approved, as they will create a dwelling house that is to a high standard of accommodation, befitting the location and heritage nature of the buildings exterior appearance.

Proposal Details



Indicative example of proposed painted timber staircase, with timber spindles and handrails.



Indicative example of proposed painted timber basement staircase, with handrail. To be painted and detailed to match the main staircase.

Internal stud partition walls will be floor to ceiling and finished with a plaster skim and painted white. The interior walls and floor of the ensuites are to be tiled and all sanitary goods are to be white.

New Internal doors will be White, Grained, 6 panel doors.

Existing Front Light-well covers at 47 Lowther Street. The proposed light-well at 46 Lowther Street will match.

All proposed mechanical extraction has been designed so that there is no outlet to the front elevation. The proposed extraction locations are marked on the proposed plans. A black uPVC vent cover will be used externally.

Basement Details

The existing basement is, by basement standards, dry with a thin, uneven concrete floor and plaster/ render walls. The exact nature of the wall finish is not certain, but appears to be off sand and cement probably with a lime element.

The proposed improvements, to bring the basement to a fully habitable state will be carried out with full compliance of Building Regulations.

Site preparation and resistance to moisture - Part C
• Structure – Walls and foundations - Part A
• Fire safety - Part B
• Conservation of fuel and power - Part L1
• Ventilation - Part F
• Resistance to the passage of sound - Part E
• Drainage and waste disposal - Part H
• Heat producing appliances - Part J

To achieve this reference to the guidance document, Basements for dwellings, published by The Basement Information Centre, will be utilised.

However for the purpose of listed building consent an indicative overview is provided here.

The existing, non original floor is to be removed and the subfloor blinded level. The basement floor is approx. 1700mm below ground level, here ground temperature are relativity constant and the ground itself acts as a thermal insulate to heat loss through the floor. To achieve the thermal requirements for the new floor approximately 50mm of DANOPREN XPS- B Closed Cell Insulation (or.sim.eq) will be installed., along with a 100mm Perimeter drainage channel connected to an accessible sump pump. This is overlaid with a floor membrane such as WYKOMOL CM20 and then topped with a 65mm concrete screed. The final finish floor either being carpet, or a tongue & groove board.

The perimeter walls are to have a Wall membrane, draining any moisture into the perimeter floor drain. Approx. 50mm of foil backed (Vapour Barrier) Closed Cell Insulation with a plasterboard finish is then fixed to the walls, using the Wall membrane product specific fixing, usually a rubber sealed fixing screw and plug. The walls are then to have a skim coat plaster finish. Services, such as electrical sockets are countersunk into the insulation layer to a max depth of approx. 20mm, taking care not to penetrate the wall facing foil vapour barrier backing.

The ceiling is to have a 100mm rockwool insulation between the existing joists, for acoustic performance and then finished with skimmed plaster board.

Damp Control

Previous Consultation responses suggest that damp within the existing basement may well be caused or exacerbated by the existing (non-original) non-vapour permeable floor and wall materials.

It is likely the case that these materials are exacerbating moisture buildup within the basement. Prior to the installation of the basement tanking system these non-original non-vapour permeable materials are to be removed from the buildings fabric.

However, further to this, the design proposals have also been prepared with careful consideration to Ground conditions of the buildings location.

The records for the area indicate that the upper levels of sub-soil are likely to be an Alluvium which is a mixture of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel. Beneath this would be what is known as Pennine Middle Coal Measures. This is a mixture of Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone.

There are four borehole records near Lowther Street. Two are on the site of the block of flats on the corner of Duke Street and the harbour front, approx. 160m away. The other two are at the end of King Street, again some 160m away.

The two at Duke Street are fairly consistent showing Made Ground for a depth of 3.0m then a Sand and Gravel to a depth of 8.1m where it changes to a mixture of Sand, Gravel, Clay and Sandstone. The water level varies from 5.4m to 6.9m, likely due to tidal effects.

The two in King Street are fairly consistent with 2.0m to 2.6m of Made Ground over a Sand and Gravel. The standing water level was 2.6m in one borehole and 2.7m in the other.

This suggests that the water table is variable most likely tidal. As the two boreholes in King Street recorded a level of 2.6m/2.7m below ground level, and given the proximity of 46 Lowther street to the Harbour, damp may be an ongoing and continuous problem in Lowther Street.

This risk indicates that tanking and drainage is required to maintain a healthy living environment in the basement.

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