Listed Building Consent

Design & Access Statement

(Rev C)

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.

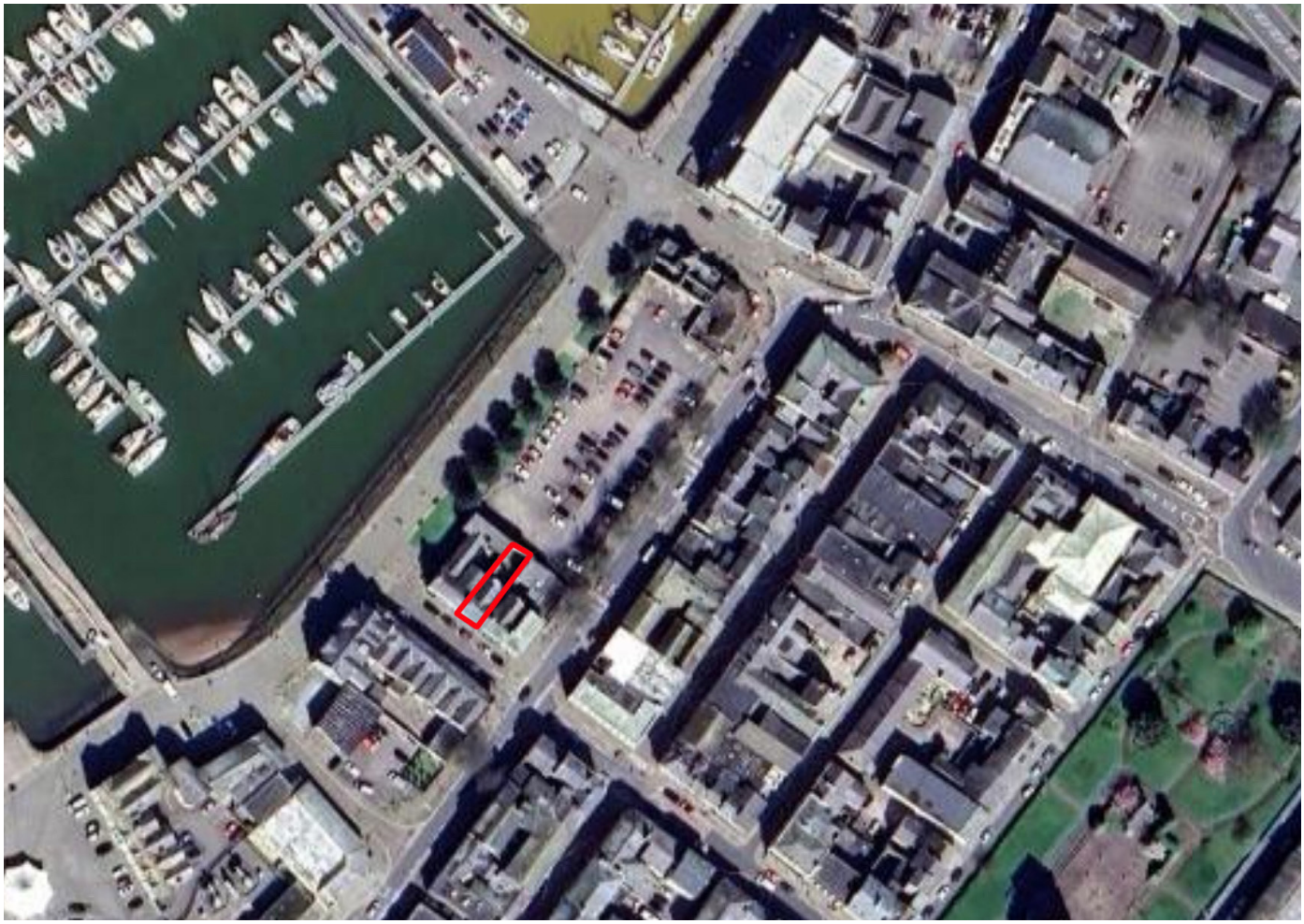
AIM
The proposed improvements are to enhance the usability of the property and improving design quality of the locality.

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;

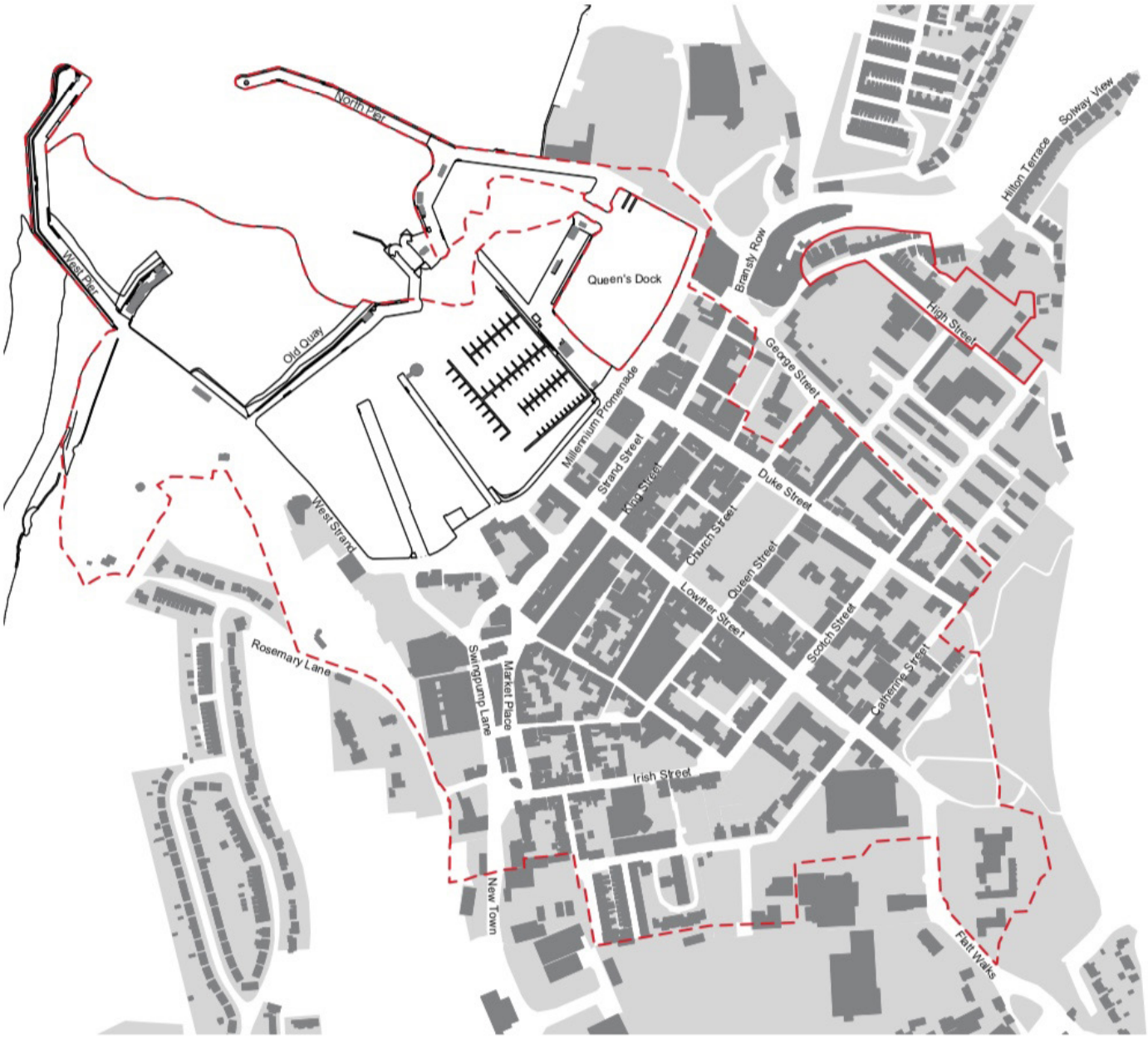
1. The proposed internal basement staircase has been relocated to preserve the internal fabric of the basement. It is proposed for the existing lean-to at the rear side of the property to be demolished and rebuilt with a rendered insulated cavity wall construction. This area is to be excavated to form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

4. Details of the proposed ensuites along with drainage piperuns and electrical servies are provided.

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. The external appearence of the property is largely unaffected by this application, with the exception of minor intereventions to the basement windows to the front and rear.

Internally the basement is to be brought back into habitable use, with a new staircase created and the property is to be reconfigured to create a 6 person, 6 bedroom HMO. Each bedroom is to have an ensuite facility and a shared kitchen is to be provided.

Proposals

It is proposed to convert the existing property into a 6 bedroom HMO. The change of use from a dwelling house (use class C3) to a small HMO (use class C4) is permitted development. To achieve a high standard of development some internal alterations to the building are required. Details of which are within this document and summarised as below;

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 the light-well to also be enlarged, with a rendered retaining wall and black metal handrail guarding.
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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.

Initially it was proposed for the new basment staircase to be located under the existing main staircase, however this required not only breaking the existing floor but also some demolition of the basement walls beneath. Following design consultaion and a full review of all potential staircase designs and locations, it has been found that the least distruptive and best location for the new stair is to excavate under the existing lean-to extension. The lean-to extension will be demolished and then rebuilt, to achieve this.

At first and second floor ensuite facilities are to be created within the large front rooms and at ground floor level the existing kitchen is to become an ensuite bedroom. As all of the proposed bedrooms will feature ensuite facilities what was the dwelling house bathroom will become a new shared kitchen facility.

Existing Situation

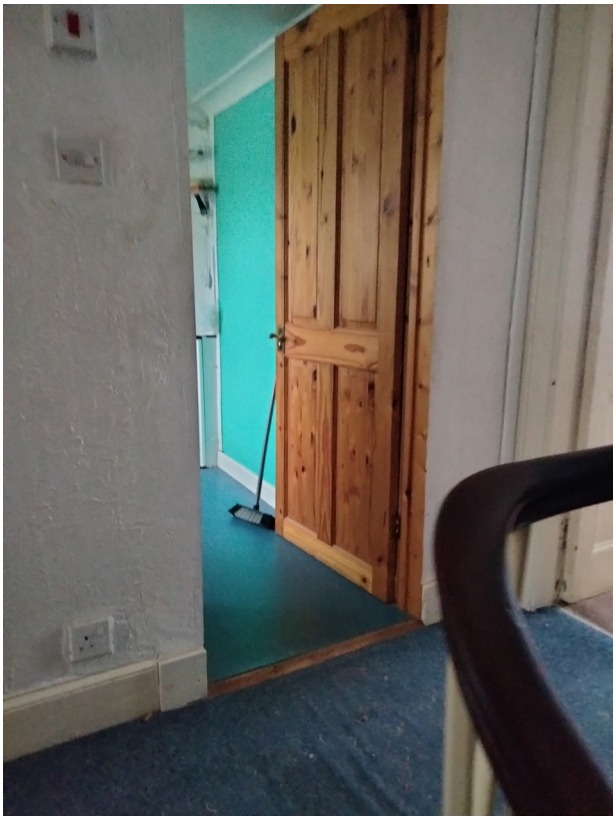
There are few noteworthy features to the existing building interior, the original fireplaces have largely been removed and wall coping and skirting are non-period relatively recent interventions. Most of the internal doors are 6 panel timber doors but are a mixture of stained timber and white painted 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 off-white gloss paint finish.

The existing staircase features a Mahogany handrail, which will be retained.

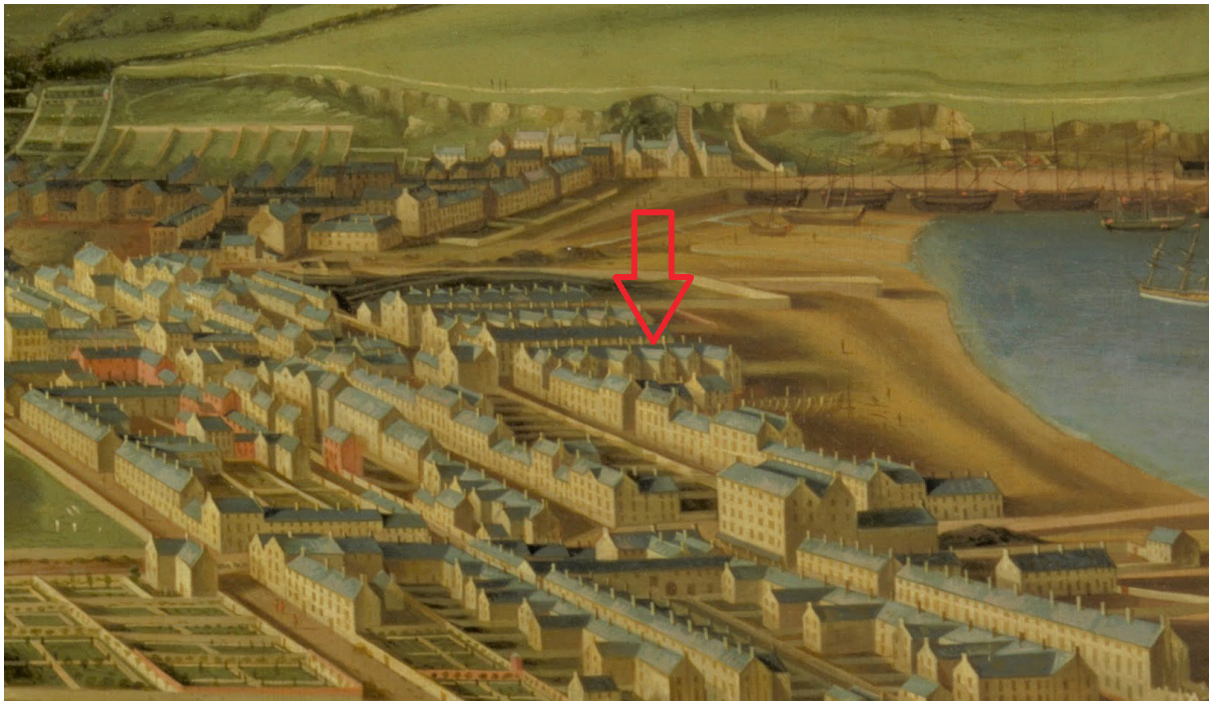
Ground Floor Front Room
It is proposed to remove the non-period fireplace.

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.

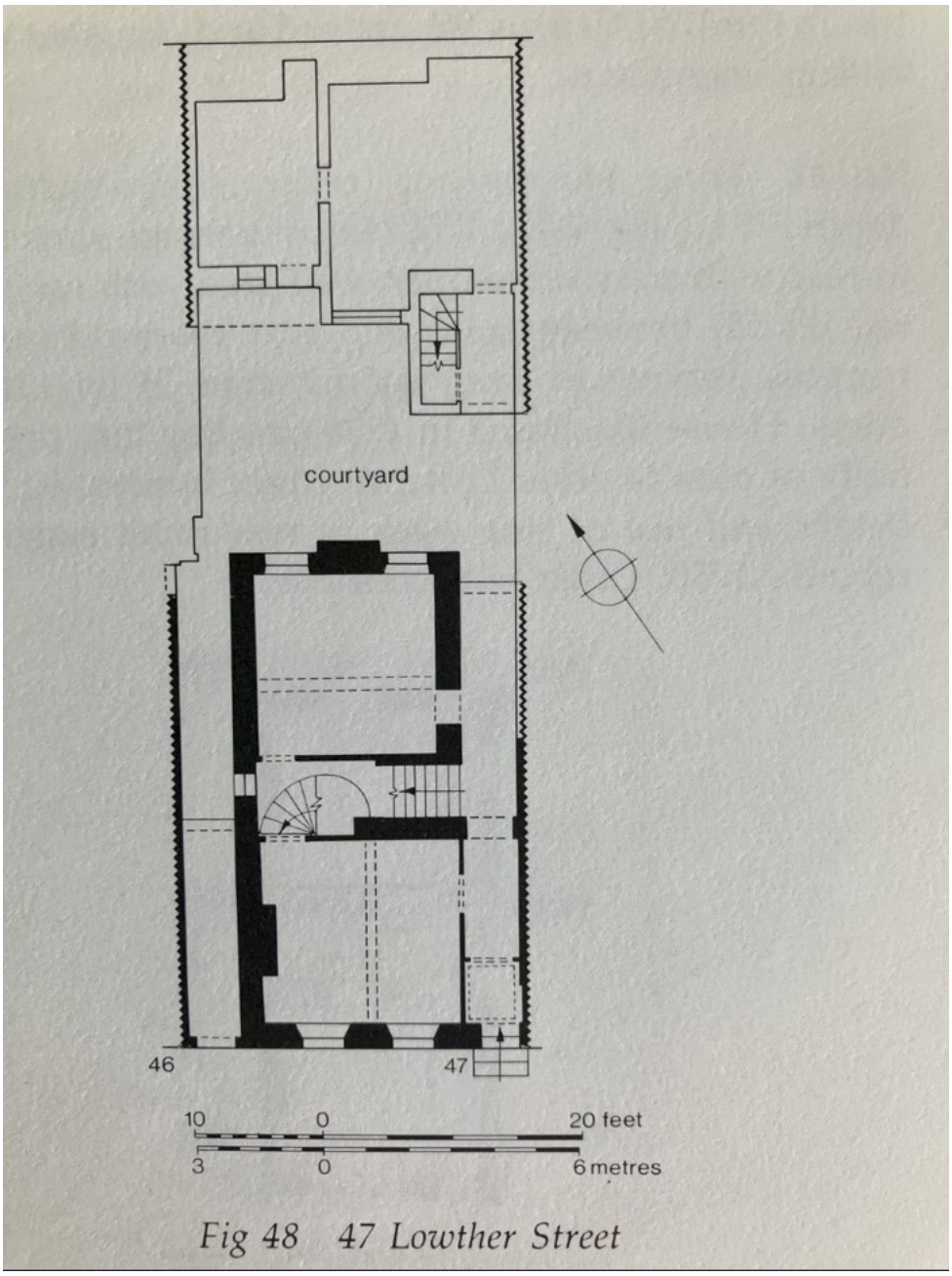


Fig 48 47 Lowther Street

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 newly excavated staircase is formed and a small section of internal wall is removed to incorporate a wash hand basin within the en-suite to the rear bedroom. The idea of increasing the overall size of the ensuite, or by using a pocket sliding door, rather than forming a small wall alcove for the wash hand basin was explored. But providing useable and accessible space for a wash basin without a wall recess substantially increases the size of the ensuite room that would be required which on balance impacts the spatial quality of the existing basement to a greater extent.

The basement is to be tanked, tanking is required due to the surrounding ground conditions (water table) and proximity to the nearby harbour. Full details and technical justification for the basement tanking system are provided later in this document. The proposed tanking system has a lifetime guarantee and such systems are found extensively throughout the country with Listed Building (grade I & II) basement works. The wall tanking build-up also provides the opportunity for new services to be installed into the basement, without further harming the overall building fabric. To allow for sufficient head height of the new staircase a small section of the existing floor within the hallway has to be removed (approx 1sq.m), however overall the new stair integrates well to the properties overall design and feel.

The owner of the property wishes to secure the long-term upkeep of the building. The proposals to create a small 6 person, 6 bedroom HMO, enable the upkeep of the property and provide for an identified housing need in the area.

The existing bathroom is to be remodelled to form a shared kitchen. There are no heritage features to the existing room. Wall tiles and the bathroom suite are relatively modern, although tired and not to a contemporary standard. The new kitchen is largely a furniture intervention, with drainage, fresh water and mechanical extract facilities already in-place to that room.

All of the bedrooms feature private shower room Wc's, in four of the rooms these are en-suite to the bedroom, rooms 4 and 6 have a private facility across the hall located to the front rooms. Previously listed building consent has been given to install en-suite facilities to rooms 4 and 6 (4/24/2144/0L1), however this does make those rooms quite small and has an impact to the character of the property.
Locating the wash-room facilities for rooms 4 and 6, to the front of the property, side by side to the en-suite for room 5 (first floor) and a shared communal toilet/utility (second floor) allows for a straightforward drainage layout, with pipe running parallel to and between the existing floor joists.
Portioning the front rooms across their width does impact the character of those rooms, but given that they are of a good and generous size, on balance this solution offers a more elegant overall design than positioning those en-suites directly in rooms 4 and 6 along with an en-suite to room 5 and the communal toilet/utility to the second floor within the front rooms.

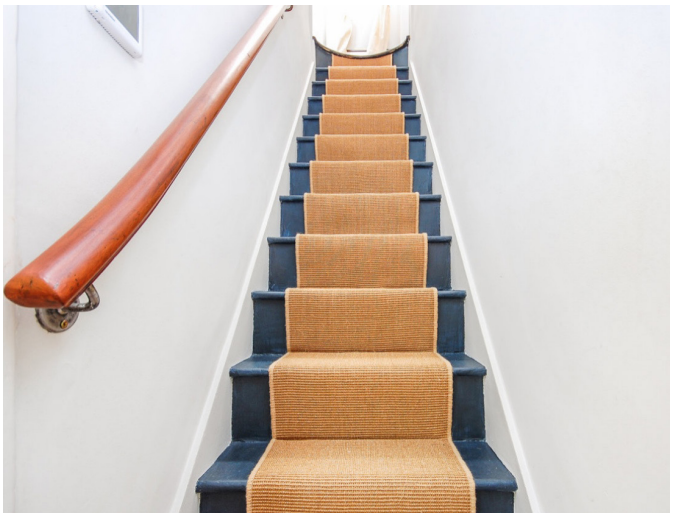
The water closets, of themselves, are relatively light touch interventions, requiring minimal fixing of stud partition walls and services that fit within the existing floor void, as such there is little physical impact to the fabric of the building. The front rooms are made smaller, but the design retains the character of full width rooms facing the principle elevation and remain generous rooms of good spatial quality.

It could be argued that individual private wash rooms are not required, however the existing bathroom would be insufficient in size to accommodate 6 unrelated individuals. Shared wash room facilities within HMO properties also often present management issues and can lead to tension and inconvenience to and between tenants. As mentioned the installation of en-suites has already been agreed in principle (4/24/2144/0L1), overall these latest proposals we believe offer an improved and less impactful arrangement.

The proposals on balance, afford future tenants a good standard and quality of private amenity and shared communal amenity. There is a shared communal living room proposed at ground floor and 1st floor levels.

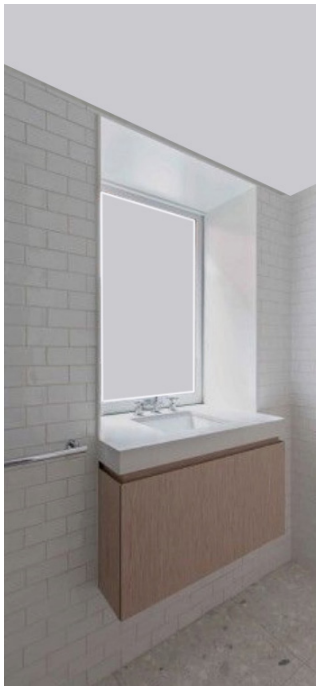
Overall, we consider the proposals offer advantages and improvements that fully justify them to be approved, as they will create a HMO dwelling house that is to a high standard of accommodation, befitting the location with limited impact to the heritage of the building, securing its longterm use and upkeep.

Proposal Details



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

Basement ensuites Saniflow system



Indicative example of a wash hand basin within a wall alcove recess

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.

The proposed tanking system also provides the oppertunity for services to be installed, electrical, fresh water and foul drainage; within the buildup of the wall tanking system. This minimises the level of intervention required to bring the basememt back into use.

The proposed basement ensuites will have a SaniFlow drainage system, details of which are provided. The rear basement ensuite room requires for a small alcove to be created in the existing wall for the wash hand basin to be installed. It was considered and explored to incease the overall size of the ensuite, but was found to become overly dominant to the room layout. The inclusion of the basin within the existing wall, as a cut out is found to be the more sensitive approach.

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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