

Design and Access Statement

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| Project Name: | Levels Digital and Gaming Hub |
| Project Number: | ED3024-0055 |
| Date: | July 2024 |
| Proposal: | Refurbishment of listed former Whittles furniture store to create a digital and gaming hub |
| Site Location: | 6-8 Duke Street, Whitehaven |
| Applicant: | BEC |
| Agent: | NORR Consulting Ltd |

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Proposed application.

This Design and Access statement is to accompany an application for NMA changes to an existing Planning Approval.

Some of these were discussed in principle on site on 20.03.2024 with Copeland Borough Council planning and conservation officers.

The statement covers items included in the NMA application. A separate application with accompanying Heritage Statement will be made for changes to items requiring Listed Building Consent.

1.2 Current planning permission.

The proposed works have been granted Planning Approval by Copeland Borough Council ref 4/21/2365/0F1 24.11.2021

This statement will not cover site location, purpose of development, change of use and access in general which have remained unchanged from the approved proposals.

There is also no external landscaping.

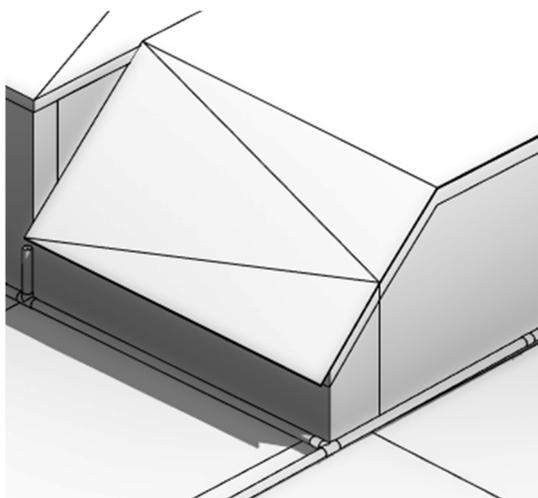
2.0 Design

2.1 Design development:

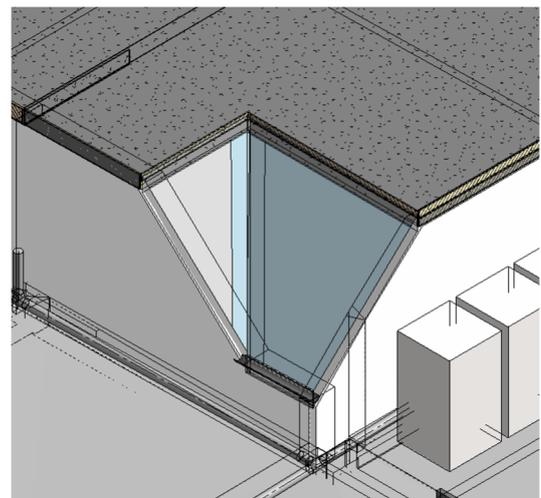
Since approval was granted in November 2021 further involvement with consultants, end users and Copeland Borough Council Building Control has resulted in proposed changes to the approved scheme:

2.1.1 Adaptation of roof structure to accommodate new stair

Hydrock, the fire engineer appointed by the client and Copeland Borough Council Building Control have confirmed that the existing spiral stair from second to third floor is not suitable for either access to the top level or means of escape. The proposals are to retain the existing stair as a historic feature and provide additional access to the upper floor by extending the existing stair within the central core with a contemporary steel stair with steel balustrades and handrails, to comply with current legislation and guidelines for access and means of escape. The new stair will require adaptations to the roof profile to provide the headroom required. The foot-print and overall height of the roof will not change; new masonry walling will be rendered to match existing; salvaged slates in diminishing courses with a lead valley will be used to form the altered mansard section.



Existing roof profile



Proposed roof profile

2.1.2 Adaptation of roof profile to accommodate lift.

The current planning application shows the existing lift extended up to serve the top floor. This would require the motor room to be located above the existing roof level – requiring a footprint larger than the lift shaft and a height greater than 2000mm to accommodate the relocated motor and control gear. This arrangement is not clear on the current approved drawings. ILECS Limited (independent lift consultants) have been engaged and have advised that the existing lift cannot be upgraded to fully meet current safety and accessibility standards. Parts required to suit the existing tubular guides are bespoke and hard to procure – meaning there are likely to be extended periods without lift provision should the parts need replacement in the future. The recommendation from ILECS is that the lift should be replaced with a new motorless room installation which will meet current safety and accessibility standards. This will require some adaptation to the existing flat roof above the mansard to provide the required headroom for a new lift to serve all levels, requiring a section of raised roof 850mm above the existing roof level, with a footprint of 1800mm x 1500mm to match the lift shaft below.

This will be considerably lower than the height of a new motor room and in line with the top of the existing stone pediment to the dormer on the southwest elevation. Its location in the centre of the roof means it will not be visible from street level until some distance from the building.

This is confirmed by the views below



KEY PLAN



VIEW A: The lift housing cannot be seen from quite a distance down King Street



VIEW B: The lift housing cannot be seen from the street corner in front of John Paul Jones



VIEW C: the lift housing is just visible from the opposite corner of the courtyard to the Waverley Hotel

2.1.3 Introduction of roof top plant and louvres to northeast wall

The heating and ventilating design for the building has been progressed since planning approval was granted to provide an energy efficient system to meet current guidelines; to minimise the impact on the existing building fabric, also taking account of low headroom; and to comply with the users' requirements for VR gaming, education and sound recording.

This has led to the proposal to provide mechanical heating and ventilation throughout, each floor to be serviced independently with an internal heat recovery unit with exposed ductwork to avoid intrusion into the existing lath and plaster ceilings. This system will require intake and exhaust louvres on the external wall at each level. The intention is to incorporate these into existing windows as much as possible on the northeast elevation, following the precedent set by buildings nearby. The windows on this wall are part of an earlier building and are currently blocked internally as they do not relate to the new floor levels introduced around 1910.

The H & V system will also require external condensers and an external location for the top floor heat recovery unit as there is no space for it within the building. It is proposed that these are located on the lower flat roof against the northeast wall to the upper floor. The size of the units and their location set back from the lower roof edge means they will not be visible from street level until some distance away from the building. The lower flat roof also has planning permission for an array of PV panels.



Proposed louvres to northwest elevation



Precedent set by nearby building

2.2 Appearance

The adaptations to the roof will be carried out using re-used salvaged slates from site; rendered masonry to match existing; and a continuation of the slate grey membrane proposed for the upgrade of the existing flat roof (included in detail drawings submitted previously and granted listed building consent).

Every effort has been made to minimise changes to the height and massing of the building and locate any changes to this away from the building edge so that they are not viewed from street level near the building.

3.0 Access

3.1 Site access, car parking and construction access.

There will be no changes to the existing vehicular and pedestrian access to the site as result of these proposed changes to the current Planning Approval.

3.2 Access into and through the building.

The community and educational uses proposed for the Digital and Gaming Hub will require the building to be fully accessible throughout, to comply with DDA legislation and guidance.

Approved Document Parts M and K are applied to the internal adaptations to achieve this.

Summary of measures applied:

- Level access from Duke Street, entrance doors recessed to provide weather protection.
- New compliant lift installation to provide wheelchair access to all levels.
- 1200mm wide stairs from ground to top floor, compliant with requirements for ambulant disabled.
- Internal doors to comply with Approved Document Part M
- Wheelchair accessible toilets on the three main levels.