

## **PLANNING STATEMENT**

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 This statement supports an application for listed building consent in relation to the replacement windows to the rear elevation of 38-42 Lowther Street, Whitehaven.

### **2.0 Listed Building**

2.1 The building is comprised of four separate buildings which have been amalgamated at various stages to create one single office building. The building is occupied by HFT Gough & Co Solicitors and has been for a considerable period.

2.2 38 Lowther Street is listed under list entry 1207835 as a Grade II listed building. The details of the listing refer to building being listed for group value with numbers 37 to 42 (consecutively forming a group). A separate group on the north side of Lowther Street 44 to 48 consecutively form a second group. The listing description makes reference to front elevation architectural features which reflect the group value listing.

2.3 39 to 42 Lowther Street is listed under list entry number 1335987. Again, the three similar houses form part of the group value. Again, the listing description focuses on the architectural features of the front elevation including the panel doors, triple sash windows and the oriel window to the first floor of 42 Lowther Street.

### **3.0 Site History and Appearance**

3.1 This proposal relates solely to the replacement of windows in the rear elevation. The buildings have been developed as a solicitors office over a period of time. It is believed that the original solicitors office was created in 42 Lowther Street and over a period of time the office use developed in an easterly direction to ultimately combine all four properties.

3.2 The property was subject to substantial alteration in 1982. These alterations included the construction of a two-storey flat roof extension to the rear elevation to accommodate toilets and a strongroom. Internal alterations to create an open plan reception area including the breaking out of a modern entrance door and window opening to the rear of the reception desk. Staff kitchen and toilets were created internally with associated external alterations to create window openings. The windows installed at the time of alterations were simple timber construction top hung casement windows. A number of the windows appear to be of a mass produced design suggesting that the window openings were created to fit the standard window sizes. In some cases the casement windows may have replaced windows of a more traditional design but it is unclear given the alterations to the building. The rear elevation of the building displays various window designs and types including some sliding sash windows with the majority of non-traditional casement or fixed light windows.

3.3 In general terms the rear elevation of the building is unattractive and has little architectural merit and does not in any way relate to the Lowther Street elevations. The lower section of the rear elevation is obscured from public view

by a high boundary wall. The external yard area is bound by the two storey flat roof extension to 37 Lowther Street (The Strand), a two storey red brick joinery workshop to the south elevation and the five storey apartment development on the site of the former YWCA building. This elevation faces Marlborough Street and is in parts obscured from view.

#### **4.0 Proposed Works**

4.1. The proposal is to replace ten of the ground floor windows with white UPVC alternatives in a similar design to the existing. The following is a description of each window which can in turn be referenced with the external and internal photographs of the windows in the photographic schedule.

(i) Window one – reception small timber casement window in poor state of repair. The window is believed to have been installed at the time of the 1982 alterations and will not harm any internal or external architectural features.

(ii) Windows two and three – interview room. These windows may occupy original traditional openings although there is no historical record. It appears that the openings as a minimum may have been enlarged during the 1982 alterations. Again, there are no internal or external architectural features which would be affected by the works. The replacement of these windows with UPVC double glazing will enhance soundproofing and privacy to the room which is crucial in light of the use of the building.

(iii) Window four – kitchen window. Again, this window appears to have been installed during the 1982 alterations. The window may be an existing opening

which again appears potentially enlarged but has no external or internal architectural merit.

(iv) Windows five to ten – all located in the ground floor toilet block with two windows in each elevation. The windows are modern in design and are late 1970's early 1980's factory mass produced timber windows. Neither the windows nor the extension have any architectural merit relative to the listing of the building.

4.2 The applicant accepts that the use of UPVC with a non-traditional material which would not normally be used in the context of a list building. The application in this case is justifiable by virtue of the very limited architectural merit of the rear elevation of the building and the fact that all the windows are entirely obscured from public view. The use of UPVC to offer a benefit to the building a form of helping mitigate water ingress to the rear elevation which has caused internal damage over a number of years. The installation of the windows is the first stage in remedying problems in relation to damp and water ingress. Furthermore, the windows will provide a level of soundproofing and privacy to meet the needs of the occupying use. In this context the proposal will offer a level of enhancement and protection to the listed building.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

5.1 Overall, the current state of our windows significantly detracts from the building's aesthetic appeal, diminishes natural light intake, and contributes to

persistent dampness and condensation issues. These conditions not only compromise the property's visual and environmental quality but also pose potential health risks and increased maintenance costs. Replacing the existing windows with modern, energy-efficient windows with USPVC double glazing would address these concerns, enhancing both the functionality and appearance of the building.

5.2 We respectfully request the council's approval for this necessary improvement to ensure a safer, more comfortable, and visually appealing environment for our staff and our clients.

## Photographic Schedule

### Reception interior and exterior – Window 1



Interior



Exterior

## Interview room – Windows 2 and 3

Interior



Exterior





## Kitchen – Window 4

Interior



Exterior



## Exterior Toilet Block – Windows 5 to 10



**Rear Elevation – Public View – Marlborough Street.**

