

# **HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

and

# **DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT**

The Waterfront. 13 West Strand. Whitehaven. CA28 7LR

Proposed Refurbishment and Associated Alterations to a Grade II Listed Building

## **CONTENTS**

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<b>1.0</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>BUILDING LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>PROPOSAL OVERVIEW</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION</b>	<b>10</b>
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>12</b>

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This assessment has been carried out in order to determine the impact of the proposed refurbishment and minor alteration works on a Grade II Listed Building situated within a Conservation Area. The appraisal is concerned with the process of conserving the special architectural and historic interest of the building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

1.2 This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 'Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings' and in particular responds to policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF). In respect of information requirements, paragraph 189 sets out that:

*"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."*

1.3 Guidance on the implementation and interpretation of historic environment policy has been provided by the Historic England publications 'Historic Environment Good Practice in Planning' notes 1 'The Historic Environment in Local Plans, GPA2 'Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and GPA3 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (Second Edition).

1.4 Planning policy for Whitehaven comprises the 'Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028' which was adopted in 2013. With respect to heritage assets, Policy ENV4 sets out that:

*The Council's policy is to maximise the value of the Borough's heritage assets by:*

- A. Protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other townscape and rural features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value*
- B. Supporting proposals for heritage led regeneration, ensuring that any listed buildings or other heritage assets are put to an appropriate, viable and sustainable use*
- C. Strengthening the distinctive character of the Borough's settlements, through the application of high quality urban design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the settings of listed buildings*

1.5 Significance has been assessed in accordance with guidance as set out in Historic England Advice Note 12 'Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets' and the former English Heritage document entitled 'Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance'

1.6 A site survey and visual inspection of the property was not possible due to Covid-19. Background research was conducted with reference to the Copeland interactive planning service, historic mapping databases, archived material, and through discussions held with the applicant. The assessment of the proposals will be conducted with reference to a

range of texts, particularly the Historic England good practise guides and local authority's appraisal of the building.

- 1.7 The following drawings have been assessed in preparation of this report:

RCA Interiors

PL01 Existing Ground Floor Plan, External Elevation and Location Plan

PL02 Proposed Ground Floor Plan, External Elevation and Block Plan

## 2.0 LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

- 2.1 13 West Strand (the building), also referred to as The Waterfront is located at national grid reference NX 97098 18141.
- 2.2 The building has a footprint of approximately 180m<sup>2</sup> (1,938ft<sup>2</sup>) and occupies a plot of approximately 275m<sup>2</sup> (2,960ft<sup>2</sup>).
- 2.3 The building lies within the Whitehaven Town Centre Conservation Area as designated and under the authority of Copeland Borough Council.
- 2.4 The building has been designated a Grade II Listed Building by Historic England and as such is one of the 92% of listed buildings in England recognised for its national importance and special interest.

## 2.5 Listing Description

**List entry No** 1086719

**Location** 13 West Strand. CA28 7LR

**District** Copeland

**Grade** II

**Date Listed** 10<sup>th</sup> July 1949

*Former music hall at rear is now demolished. The former hotel is three storeys, painted stone with rusticated ground floor, quoins, cornice, and hipped roof. Square plan, freestanding. Ground floor has three round-arched openings (windows and doors), three sash windows on each upper floor, the 1st-floor windows having cornices.*

*Nos 10 to 13 (consec) form a group with No 1 Hamilton Lane.*

## 3.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

- 3.1 The original building, circa 1800 is a three-storey single pile structure of three bays to the principle and side elevations with a considerable modern extension to the rear. The building is typically Georgian in style and stylistically consistent with many historic buildings within the local area.

3.2 In attributing levels of significance to the asset as a whole or elements of the asset, levels of significance are graded as follows:

1. EXCEPTIONAL

*This would correspond to an individual Grade I or II\* Listed Building or an element which is intact, has a special interest, and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.*

2. HIGH

*A designated heritage asset which has significance at national level, such as Grade II listed buildings or an element which is relatively intact, has a special interest and makes an important contribution to the wider significance of the building.*

3. MEDIUM

*A non-designated heritage asset such as a Locally Listed Building which is considered to be important at a local to regional level or an element which has been altered, has less special interest, and its contribution to the wider significance of the site is less important. May include less significant parts of statutorily Listed Buildings.*

4. LOW

*A non-designated asset important at a local level such as a building which makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area (key building) or an element which has been significantly altered, has a low level of integrity, the special interest has been lost and it makes little contribution to the wider significance of the site.*

5. NEUTRAL

*An element which is considered to be historically unimportant but does not have a harmful impact on a heritage asset. This may include insignificant interventions to designated and non-designated heritage assets and buildings that do not make a positive contribution to a Conservation Area.*

6. INTRUSIVE

*A building or element which is considered to be historically unimportant and has a harmful impact on a heritage asset.*

3.3 High significance is attributed to the building's illustrative historic interest being representative of a period of considerable local and national development and growth.

High significance is also attributed to the building's architectural (aesthetic) interest being a good example of revival Georgian architecture. The extension to the rear of the building has a considerable impact but the aesthetics of the building are best appreciated to the principal and side elevations which remain broadly original

3.4 Medium significance is attributed to the building's archaeological (evidential) interest. The building has been substantially altered and adapted and historic plan form has been severely compromised, primarily at ground floor level where internal and historic external walls have been removed.

3.5 Low significance is attributed the building's interior. Internal features have also been lost through many waves of refurbishments, which is typical for such buildings.

- 3.6 Neutral significance is attributed to the modern alterations aside from the structural changes. The building has been fitted out to suit its purpose (adaptive re-use). The majority of modern fixtures and fittings are honest and are not overly oppressive and at least contribute to the building's continued and viable use.
- 3.7 The extensions to the rear are considered to be intrusive as they have resulted in considerable harm being caused to the historic, archaeological and architectural values attributed to the building and are in themselves of low quality.
- 3.8 The building is clearly a significant contributor to the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area and is considered to be a building of merit in context.
- 3.9 The overall significance of the building in local level is considered to be high and at national level to be medium.

#### **4.0 PROPOSAL OVERVIEW**

- 4.1 The proposals form part of a wider cosmetic refurbishment scheme and comprise minor internal alterations and the formation of a new opening to the rear elevation for installation of a window and folding door system.
- 4.2 The proposals are considered necessary to support short to medium term use.
- 4.3 The design of the proposed new doors is intended to be a visual improvement to the rear single storey modern extension which is currently a blank gable to the rear of the Kitchen.

- 4.4 The proposed doors will not form an access to the building which will remain the existing principal and side entrances which provide level access for wheelchair users.

#### **5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 To follow is a detailed critical analysis of the proposed changes. The purpose of this analysis is to manage the change using methodology as advocated by Historic England (2008) and is categorised as follows:

**Proposal:** Brief description of the proposal together with an assessment to establish whether there is enough information to comprehensively understand the impact of the proposals on the character and historic significance of the building

**Significance:** Attributing levels of significance as set out in section 6 to the historic, archaeological and architectural interest and heritage values of the elements due to change under the proposals.

**Impact:** Consideration of the effects of the proposal on authenticity and integrity of the heritage values attributed to the building. Levels of impact are graded as follows:

**Substantial Negative** – where any level of harm caused by proposals would not be acceptable.

**Moderate Negative** – where minor harm may be acceptable with considerable overriding need/benefit.

**Minor Negative** – where moderate or minor harm may be acceptable with considerable overriding need/benefit.

**Benign** – where proposals may be acceptable if they demonstrably have no discernible impact.

**Minor Positive** – where proposals should be acceptable if they make a minor contribution to reinstate, further reveal or improve elements of heritage value. Cumulative minor improvements may be considered to offset against harm elsewhere.



**Moderate Positive** – where proposals should be acceptable if they make a moderate contribution to reinstate, further reveal or improve elements of heritage value. Singular moderate improvements may be considered to offset against harm elsewhere.

**Substantial Positive** – where proposals should be acceptable if they make a substantial contribution to reinstate, further reveal or improve elements of heritage value. Singular substantial improvements may be considered to offset against harm elsewhere.

**Compensation:** Consideration of any consequential conservation-based benefits resulting from the proposal.

**Reversibility:** Whilst the quality of the architecture and intended specification of materials is intended to last the test of time, this is not always a given. Should the proposal not perform as expected, consideration is given to the ease of reversibility so as not to prejudice alternative future solutions.

**Mitigation:** Consideration of the necessity mitigate the impact of loss of any element of historic significance resulting from the proposals such as recording and archiving.

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Installation of new sliding doors to rear gable and metal railings to existing low wall.		
<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>Historic Interest</b>	<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	<b>Architectural Interest</b>
	INTRUSIVE	INTRUSIVE	INTRUSIVE
<b>IMPACT</b>	BENIGN	BENIGN	BENIGN
	The existing single storey extension to the rear is of low value. The proposals will not impact on either the setting nor the architectural interest attributed to the building and will have no discernible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.		
<b>REVERSIBILITY</b>	N/A		
<b>MITIGATION</b>	N/A		
<b>COMPENSATION</b>	The proposals at least add some visual design integrity to the rear utilitarian elevation which is highly visible from the public realm.		



<b>PROPOSAL</b>	General internal refurbishment comprising redecoration of walls, ceilings and joinery elements, replacement floor finishes and replacement fixtures and fittings.		
<b>SIGNIFICANCE</b>	<b>Historic Interest</b>	<b>Archaeological Interest</b>	<b>Architectural Interest</b>
	INTRUSIVE	INTRUSIVE	INTRUSIVE
<b>IMPACT</b>	BENIGN	BENIGN	BENIGN
	No further details have been provided but the proposals appear to involve only alteration and replacement of modern cosmetic elements. The proposals are necessary in order to ensure continued commercial viability and ongoing sustainability.		
<b>REVERSIBILITY</b>	N/A		
<b>MITIGATION</b>	N/A		
<b>COMPENSATION</b>	N/A		

## **6.0 FLOOD RISK**

- 6.1 The government's flood warning information services states that the building lies within an area of HIGH RISK from surface water flooding and VERY LOW RISK from flooding occurring from rivers and the sea.
- 6.2 The proposals comprise the installation of new doors to the rear of the premises in addition to the existing entrance doors to the principal front elevation and side elevation and the means of escape doors to the rear.
- 6.3 The proposals do not alter the characteristics of the building in terms of its ability to withstand flooding.
- 6.4 The proposals therefore present no additional flood risk.

## **7.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The Waterfront, Whitehaven is a late C18th/ early C19th Georgian Inn which has been adapted for re-use and currently operates as a Public House/Bar.
- 7.2 The building is a statutorily Grade II Listed Building (designated heritage asset) and is situated within a Conservation Area.
- 7.3 The building's primary significance lies within its architectural, illustrative and associative values.
- 7.4 The building has been heavily altered internally and extended externally although the principal and side elevation remains broadly original.
- 7.5 The proposals comprise internal alteration and refurbishment works and a new external doorway to the rear.

- 7.6 The proposals have the potential to significantly impact on the special architectural and historic interest of the building. This assessment has been produced in order to assess the impact.
- 7.7 This document has isolated the changes proposed to the building and made an assessment based on their individual impact. Broadly, the proposals have been assessed as follows having no discernible impact on the special architectural and historic character of the building.
- 7.8 The proposals are therefore consistent with the objectives set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (CLG, 2012. S12 Para131) stating:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
  - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
  - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 7.9 In conclusion, the author considers that the proposals present no significant risk in terms of unnecessarily compromising the significance of the heritage asset and that the objectives set out by Historic England and the National Planning Policy Framework have been met insofar as:
- a. there is sufficient information comprehensively to understand the impacts of the proposal on the significance of the place;

- b. the proposal would not materially harm the values of the place, which, where appropriate, would be reinforced or further revealed;
- c. the proposals aspire to a quality of design and execution which may be valued now and in the future;
- d. the long-term consequences of the proposals can, from experience, be demonstrated to be benign, or the proposals are designed not to prejudice alternative solutions in the future.

7.10 It is therefore recommended that the application is permitted subject to conditions set out in accordance with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework ensuring that they are:

- 1. necessary;
- 2. relevant to planning and;
- 3. to the development to be permitted;
- 4. enforceable;
- 5. precise and;
- 6. reasonable in all other respects.

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