

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT
Incorporating Impact Assessment

14 ST GEORGES TERRACE
MILLOM

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Job no. 20108

Rev A – General Update



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1. Introduction

Norman Nicholson OBE was a well-known Cumbrian poet, born and raised in Millom. He passed away in 1987, having had a career in writing from 1930 until his death.

He is best known for his poetry; however, he also wrote plays, novels, criticism and essays.

Nicholson's writing was heavily influenced by his local area, the industrial coastal towns of Cumbria, and its people, as well as faith and religion.

He was elected to the Royal Society of Literature in 1945, was awarded the Queens Award for Poetry in 1977 and an OBE in 1981, amongst other notable accomplishments.

Nicholson lived at 14 St. Georges Terrace, Millom, for practically his entire life. The property is now a landmark literary house making it a culturally significant building to Cumbria and the North.

The Norman Nicholson House CIC secured funds to purchase the building back in 2022 with a view to creating a museum, café and outreach centre which will become the focus of the society's activities.

The building is a brick built mid-terrace property with accommodation spread over three floors including the attic space. The building is currently sat vacant however, previous use included commercial operation to the ground floor and storage to the first floor. The upper floor (attic) currently has no real use, but it was once bedrooms; the roadside space with its brick cheeked dormer and slate pitched roof being the place where Nicholson did most of his writing.

Out shuts have been added to the rear consisting of a two-storey extension as well as a single storey timber framed room (a former kitchen) which is clad in corrugated asbestos cement on its walls and roof. There is a fragment of the original painted corrugated iron sheet remaining. The frontage onto the street has a glass window with recessed doorway to create a sheltered lobby. Originally the ground floor front space was a men's outfitters run by Nicholson's father. The ground floor rear room being a parlour space with kitchen and pantry to the rear. Accommodation on the upper floor was a living room and bedrooms with bedrooms in the attic also.

In December 2024 planning permission was granted for conversion, restoration and extension to create a museum, café, outreach centre and holiday let (Ref 4/24/2314/0F1). A technical start was made on the original shopfront restoration with works being completed in April 2025.

Following the completion of the shopfront restoration the NNH CIC have progressed Phase 2 of the project which includes the extension works and internal restoration works. Due to funding limitations, the NNH CIC have reviewed and ultimately reduced the scope of works for Phase 2 to better align with the potential funding available. A new application is therefore being submitted for the revised design.

2. Design Statement

2.1 Amount

The members of the Norman Nicholson House CIC would like to convert, restore & extend no. 14 St Georges Terrace to create a museum, café and outreach centre for the local community and beyond. The development is to attract a variety of people, not just Norman Nicholson enthusiasts, and would show the life of a local businessman (Nicholson's father) as well as the life and works of Norman Nicholson.

It is proposed that the existing ground floor is converted to create a café facility which will serve to bring in the main revenue for the project. The first and second floors are proposed to be utilised as exhibition space, including restoring the interiors to depict what the property would have looked like during Nicholson's occupation as well as exhibiting artefacts & memorabilia, and providing an audio-visual memory experience.

The ground floor extension will upgrade the services of the building providing an accessible WC and needed storage space.

The second floor dormer will provide access to a second escape stair from the upper level of the building, as required under Approved Document B, fire safety.

2.2 Layout

A detailed layout of the proposals is shown on JCA drawing number 20108/29 submitted with the application.

- To the ground floor, it is proposed the space is utilised as a café, with servery and seating area and an extension housing storage and an accessible WC. The café would serve to bring in revenue for the project.
- The first floor would be for use as an exhibition space for the society. The original living room and bedroom (which would have been his parents) would be restored to depict what it would have looked like during Nicholson's life as well as exhibiting artefacts and memorabilia.
- In the attic space Norman Nicholson's bedroom would be fully restored and arranged as a museum. This is the space where Nicholson did most of his writing whilst sitting in the dormer window. The rear bedroom would be converted for use as an audio-visual memory experience. A dormer extension provides an escape route out to a second escape stair, as required for buildings over two-storeys tall.

2.3 Scale

The proposed extension to the rear sits on the footprint of the existing kitchen extension and is single storey.

The dormer to the second floor has been kept as small as possible to keep the scale of development to a minimum, as well as the configuration of the external escape stair.

The internal space requirements have also dictated the extent of development required to achieve the optimal viable use for the building in modern society and the needs that come with that.

The back lane of St Georges Terrace has seen change over the years which includes an increase in massing of built development.

2.4 Landscaping

There are no landscaping works included in the proposal.

2.5 Appearance

Detailing of the extension is more contemporary than the existing building. We propose a clear distinction between the original restored property and the new extension. The walls of the extension & dormer take precedent from the fragment of original painted corrugated iron sheet, using a new colour coated corrugated metal as cladding. The choice of material would also reflect the industrial heritage of the town. The use of vernacular materials in a more contemporary way allows the proposal to be of their own time and the historic development of the site is therefore apparent.

2.6 Sustainability

The extension will be carried out to meet the insulation requirements of Building Regulation Part L.

It is intended local contractors will be engaged where possible to carry out the works and that local materials are used wherever possible, again to reduce carbon footprint.

3. Access Statement

3.1 Convenience of Access

The project is located in Millom. Millom benefits from numerous local shops and social amenities. Here good bus and rail links to other settlements in the county can be found.

3.2 Access for Emergency Vehicles

There is good access for emergency vehicle services which will not be affected by the proposal.

4. Heritage Statement

This section assesses the relative significance of the site as a whole and its significance in relation to the wider setting of the Millom Conservation Area. Significance can relate to architectural quality, associated people or events, social history, and community value. Some of these values can be tangible such as any listed building grade, or they may be intangible such as the site's association with a past event, person, or cultural movement.

"Millom's conservation area is at the town's centre and takes the form of several core zones in close proximity with streets and avenues radiating off them. This is indicative of the nature of Millom as a place that grew from its connection to the railway line: the station sits at the heart of the conservation area; the railway bisects it.

The centre is characterised by predominantly two-storey terraces in a mixture of red brick, roughcast render, pebble-dash, and watershot slate with red sandstone dressings. Roofs are a mixture of slate and tile. The conservation area is surrounded by areas of two-storey detached and semi-detached post-war housing on its west and south sides, and the regimented late Victorian streets of the New Town on its east. The town's roofscape is relieved from certain angles by the spire of St George's Church, but is otherwise quite uniformly low.

Much of the fabric of Millom's town centre dates from a relatively narrow window of time between the 1860s and 1900s. Since then, the main changes to Millom's built area, aside from the loss of the iron-related industrial sites in the 1960s-70s, have been the creation of areas of housing on the edges of the Victorian settlement." (Millom Conservation Area Appraisal, 2021).

St Georges Terrace has many characteristics of the new town of Millom that attribute to the significance of the local area.

"St George's Terrace, which connects St George's Road with Lapstone Road, dates from 1880. Number 14 is notable for being the location in which poet Norman Nicholson was born and lived for much of his life, taking inspiration from and writing about his surroundings. The house itself is an example of a Victorian shopkeeper's premises and lodgings, but is particularly valuable for its historical association.

This row of houses, which have variously been converted into shops, are constructed in brick but have been given rendered finishes sometime during the 20th century. Their walls are likely of solid construction as cavity wall construction was invented only in the very last years of the 19th century, and didn't become widespread until the first and second decades of the 20th." (Millom Conservation Area Appraisal, 2021).

4.1 Assessment of Heritage Significance

Within the Millom Conservation Area Appraisal 14 St Georges Terrace is noted as an unlisted building that possesses some notable architectural or historical importance.

The building holds cultural significance primarily due to its connection with the poet Norman Nicholson, who lived at the property practically his entire life; his work influenced by his setting and the people within it. It is a good example of a mid-19th Century terraced property and a prime example of a historical lived over shop / business; however, it has fallen into a poor state of repair.

The site has seen some disturbance, notably in the late 19th Century when the house was converted into a shop. There have been many changes made to the house, primarily more recently in terms of repairs, maintenance & internal decoration.

The internal room layout is still legible; however, some works were carried out, altering the circulation space when the property was converted into a café after Nicholson's death.

4.2 Heritage Values Assessment

An assessment of the significance of the wider site can also be made by considering the contribution the site makes to the character of the setting under certain recognised categories:

- Evidential – what evidence of the history of the building and the site still remains visible or could be concealed.
- Historic – what knowledge of the building and the site exists in archives and what contribution to the significance of the site does that history make.
- Aesthetic – does the building or site making an important contribution to the character and appearance of the wider setting.
- Communal – an understanding of the contribution the building makes to the local community and the wider public, for instance a local landmark.

An assessment of the building and site under these category headings will help form an opinion about Significance based on statutorily recognised Heritage Values.

For more information with regards to the Heritage Values Assessment, refer to the Heritage Statement by Marion Barter Associates Ltd, submitted with the application.

4.3 Assessment of Impact

The impact of the development on the site is positive. Its character will be entirely retained with the change and intervention seeking to preserve the structure and remove unsympathetic alterations.

The proposal is to create a museum, café and outreach centre for the local community and beyond. The internal layout has been carefully considered to minimise impact on the existing walls and fabric.

The proposal to remove the rear out-shuts and construct a new extension will lead to less than substantial harm of the heritage asset however, the accommodation and upgrade of the facilities for use as a public building would secure its optimum viable use.

5. Photos



Principal Elevation prior to restoration works



Principal Elevation following restoration works



Back lane



Rear Elevation



Corrugated out-shut to be removed



Existing rear elevation



Internal view of dormer window at first floor bedroom - Norman Nicholson's former bedroom.



Internal view of first floor bedroom - Norman Nicholson's former bedroom.



Existing staircase



Existing staircase & balustrade



Existing first floor room



Existing first floor room



Existing first floor room



Existing first floor room



Existing ground floor room



Existing ground floor room



Existing downstairs cupboard showing historic wall paper



Existing cupboard showing historic wallpaper



Existing kitchen in ground floor extension, to be demolished



Existing kitchen in ground floor extension, to be demolished



Existing door opening – formerly the division between the shop and living accommodation



Existing door – thought to have been the original front door, prior to shop front conversion.