

Installation of New Ethernet Fibre Optic Service

44 Irish Street, Whitehaven, Cumbria

Grade II Listed Building

1. Introduction

This Habitat and Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of proposed telecommunications works at **44 Irish Street, Whitehaven**, a **Grade II Listed Building**. The works comprise the installation of a new independent Ethernet fibre optic service for **OVE Arup & Partners International Limited**, with the service provision ordered through **BT Wholesale** and installation undertaken by **Openreach**.

The proposed installation will provide a resilient communications connection that will operate independently of the existing telecommunications service, providing redundancy and continuity of service should either circuit fail.

The statement assesses the impact of the proposals upon both the historic significance of the listed building and any ecological interests that may be affected by the works. It demonstrates that the proposed works have been specifically designed to minimise intervention within the historic fabric, utilise existing infrastructure wherever possible, and ensure that the character and appearance of the listed building are preserved.

2. Site Description

44 Irish Street is a Grade II Listed Building located within the historic core of Whitehaven. The building contributes positively to the architectural and historic character of the area through its historic fabric, traditional construction materials, and surviving internal and external features.

The proposed telecommunications infrastructure is to be installed predominantly within existing service routes and building voids, ensuring that the works remain unobtrusive and do not affect significant architectural elements.

3. Description of Proposed Works

The proposed works comprise:

- Installation of a new Ethernet fibre optic service.
- Provision of a new external black fibre cable from the existing BT network infrastructure located on New Town adjacent to the site.
- Routing of the cable into the building via the existing telecommunications entry point serving the utility room.
- Installation of a new white Dual Circuit Box (DCB) adjacent to the existing DCB within the utility room.
- Connection into the existing internal duct route.
- Installation of approximately 50 metres of internal white fibre optic cable.
- Routing of the cable via existing riser cupboards, service voids and loft space following the alignment of the existing telecommunications cable.
- Utilisation of existing cable containment and trunking wherever present.
- Termination of the new circuit within the first-floor server room.

- Final termination within a new splice tray located inside the existing communications cabinet.

No alterations are proposed to the building's layout, historic plan form, architectural features, or structural elements.

4. Heritage Significance

The significance of the Grade II Listed Building derives from:

- Its architectural interest as a historic building within Whitehaven.
- Its contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding historic streetscape.
- The survival of historic building fabric.
- The building's evidential, historic and communal value.

Any works affecting a listed building must have regard to the statutory duty under Sections 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

5. Heritage Impact Assessment

External Works

The external element of the proposal is limited to the installation of a fibre optic cable entering the building through the established telecommunications service route.

A new Dual Circuit Box will be installed adjacent to the existing telecommunications equipment within the utility room service area. The location has been selected specifically to avoid visual clutter on principal elevations and to consolidate telecommunications infrastructure within an area already associated with modern building services.

The works will not result in the loss of historic fabric, alteration of architectural detailing, or adverse effects upon significant elevations.

Internal Works

Internally, the proposed fibre cable will utilise:

- Existing service ducts.
- Existing riser cupboards.
- Existing loft spaces.
- Existing telecommunications routes.
- Existing trunking within the first-floor server room.

The cable route has been designed to follow an established service network already accommodating telecommunications infrastructure. Consequently, there will be no requirement for new visible cable runs through significant spaces and no impact upon historic architectural features.

The cable will remain concealed within existing service areas and containment systems and will not alter the character, appearance or operation of the building.

Assessment of Harm

The works represent a limited and highly sensitive infrastructure upgrade that:

- Utilises existing service infrastructure.
- Avoids historically significant fabric.
- Introduces only minimal and reversible interventions.
- Does not affect the building's architectural or historic significance.

The proposals are therefore considered to result in **no harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset**.

6. Reversibility

A key principle of the proposed installation is reversibility.

The fibre optic cabling and associated telecommunications equipment:

- Can be removed in the future without damage to significant historic fabric.
- Utilise existing routes and containment.
- Avoid structural intervention.
- Do not require the removal of historic materials or features.

Should telecommunications requirements change in future, the installation can be removed and the building returned to its current condition with minimal evidence of the works remaining.

7. Habitat and Ecological Assessment

The proposed works consist solely of telecommunications installation within an existing building and along existing service routes.

Key ecological considerations are as follows:

Internal Works

All internal works are confined to existing service areas, risers, cupboards and loft spaces previously used for building services.

No vegetation removal, ground disturbance, demolition or alteration of roof structures is proposed.

External Works

The installation will make use of existing telecommunications infrastructure and established service entry points.

No excavation works, tree removal, vegetation clearance or disturbance to habitats are required.

Protected Species

Given the nature of the works, their limited extent and use of existing service routes, the proposals are not anticipated to affect habitats supporting protected species.

Nevertheless, should evidence of bats, nesting birds, or other protected species be identified during the works, operations will cease immediately and ecological advice will be sought prior to works recommencing.

Ecological Impact

The proposed development:

- Does not result in habitat loss.

- Does not involve disturbance of vegetation.
- Does not impact protected species habitat.
- Does not alter the ecological value of the site.

The ecological impact of the proposed works is therefore considered to be **negligible**.

8. Mitigation Measures

To ensure the continued protection of the listed building and any ecological interests, the following measures will be implemented:

- Existing cable routes and service voids will be utilised wherever possible.
 - Existing telecommunications entry points will be reused.
 - Historic fabric will be avoided.
 - Any fixings required will be kept to the minimum necessary.
 - All works will be undertaken by suitably qualified telecommunications engineers.
 - Cable routing will remain concealed within existing service areas and containment.
 - Site personnel will remain vigilant for evidence of protected species.
 - Any unexpected heritage features encountered during installation will be reported immediately and avoided.
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9. Planning Policy Context

The proposals are consistent with:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The works accord with the objectives of the NPPF by:

- Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- Sustaining the significance of designated heritage assets.
- Supporting modern communications infrastructure necessary for business operations.
- Ensuring any impact upon heritage significance is avoided through sensitive design and routing.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The proposals preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building through the use of existing service routes and a fully reversible installation methodology.

Historic England Guidance

The proposals accord with Historic England guidance promoting the careful integration of modern services within historic buildings while minimising intervention in historic fabric and ensuring reversibility.

10. Conclusion

The proposed installation of a new Ethernet fibre optic service at **44 Irish Street, Whitehaven** has been carefully designed to utilise existing telecommunications infrastructure and established cable routes throughout the building.

The works involve only minimal intervention, avoid impacts upon significant historic fabric, and are entirely reversible. External and internal cabling will follow existing service routes and containment systems, ensuring that the installation remains discreet and does not affect the character, appearance or significance of the Grade II Listed Building.

No impacts upon habitats, protected species or ecological features are anticipated.

Accordingly, the proposed works are considered to result in:

- **No harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building;**
- **No loss of historic fabric or architectural interest;**
- **Negligible ecological impact; and**
- **A sensitive, reversible and proportionate enhancement to the building's telecommunications infrastructure.**

The proposals therefore represent an appropriate balance between the conservation of heritage significance and the operational requirements of a modern communications network.