

PROPOSED INTERNAL ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO 22 LOWTHER STREET WHITEHAVEN FOR WEST CUMBRIA SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE BUILDING

22 Lowther Street is a nineteenth century three storey building within a row. Grade 2 listed.

PROPOSAL

The proposal involves significant internal alterations to make the building suitable for the people who work within the building and more importantly for the visitors who come to the building for guidance and assistance, some of whom are blind or partially sighted.

The building needs to be more welcoming for both staff working in it and visitors accessing the building.

Alterations have taken place in the past, without consent, by former occupants of the building.

This proposal seeks to remedy this by the internal alterations and minor external alterations to the shopfront entrance to comply with current Disabled Access Regulations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET AND THE PROPOSALS

External shopfront-

The shopfront is designed in the traditional form with a recessed entrance, typical of 19th century shopfronts on Lowther Street.

Alterations to the recessed entrance door are proposed making it wider to comply with current Disabled Access Regulations and to ease access in to the ground floor for blind and partially sighted visitors.

Repairs/replacements to any defective timber framing of the shopfront will take place replacing like with like in timber, detailing to be approved by condition under any future Approval.

We consider all these improvements to the shopfront and entrance should be considered as POSITIVE.

Central Staircase-

The central staircase, which is part of the original building is now retained from ground to second floor. The balustrading and hand rails will be retained and refurbished as necessary. Any replacement timbers required will be replaced in New treated timber copying the mouldings of the original design.

(There was some confusion over the plans from ground floor to half landing of the central staircase, which showed a wall across the staircase. This wall was the wall below the staircase leading down into the basement. No wall will be built across the central staircase, a revised plan is attached to this Statement).

We consider retention of the existing central staircase should be regarded as POSITIVE.

Straight Staircase-

A new straight staircase leads from the recessed entrance lobby up to first floor level. It was installed by former owners when the main central staircase was blocked off to create a staff WC and store.

It disrupts the flow of people through the building between floors and people have to exit the building and come back in to the ground floor shop from outside.

As part of the new alterations it will be removed, as the old central staircase will be Brought back in to use.

This proposal should be regarded as POSITIVE.

The Plan form and layout of the spaces

Affected by the proposals-

The primary reason behind the proposals is to make the building more "user friendly" for both visitors and staff. It is not at the moment.

Staff are spread over two floors, ground and first. The second floor is underused and the ground floor shop is the only area where visitors, (some of whom are either blind or partially sighted), can access.

No proper disabled toilets exist, and the level difference between ground floor shop and upper ground floor, does again cause access issues with visitors.

A new platform lift will make access to Upper ground floor easy.

Access to the group activities room, the sensory garden and the disabled WC all located on Upper ground level, will be easy.

It is proposed that the ground floor shop and upper ground floor will be primarily use for visitors to the building.

The first floor is now planned for staff use, with offices, staff kitchen and staff WC all located on one floor.

The lift is shown to access all floors at this stage of the proposals, but this may be amended if required, (cost implications), to just ground floor us only between ground and upper ground as a platform only lift.

If the lift is taken through the upper floors it does not affect and listed details of the building, as on the first floor it is located over the old straight staircase.

The second floor will be used as a further meeting room for Trustees of the Society, with WC facilities adjacent to the room.

Meetings are also held between other Society branches in the County so a separate room, from staff offices is a useful addition to the plan form.

It is therefore considered that the changed plan form and layout should be regarded as a POSITIVE change to the building from its present plan which does not function properly for both occupants and visitors.

Existing Conservatory upper ground floor-

The existing conservatory located on the rear face of the building has been erected by previous owner without, I believe, Listed Building Consent.

It is out of character with the building and serves no useful purpose, being too warm in summer and too cold in winter.

It will be removed as part of the overall proposals for the building. New glazed doors will lead from the Group Activities room, in to the Sensory Garden, which will be designed by our Landscape Architect, to produce an area which will enhance the visitor experience, and replace an empty unused courtyard.

The removal of the existing conservatory should be regarded as a POSITIVE contribution to the overall project.

Walls/Floors/other fabric items affected by insertion of a lift and other internal alterations such as first floor staff WC and kitchen-

No important items of fabric will be affected by the insertion of the lift, (if it is used to access three floors). The central staircase is not affected,

The new staff facilities on the first floor are located in a recent flat roofed two storey rear extension which has been added by previous owners.

This extension has used modern detailing throughout, and the old original three storey building is not affected.

We regard these changes in the plan form as NEUTRAL .

Existing windows to front and rear and shopfront-

It will be necessary in some areas, (in particular to second floor windows to rear and side), to replace timber windows. These will be replaced in traditional timber sliding sash windows throughout retaining all former details.

Any alterations to the shopfront, entrance door and fascia will also be subject to conditions , attached to any future approval, to ensure that the character of the old building is retained and enhanced by the changes.

The front windows above the shopfront may also require attention either repairs or replacement. These will be in timber sliding sash styles and subject to any conditions attached to any future approval.

It is considered that these changes should be regarded as a POSITIVE contribution to the overall proposals.

Window shutters and internal doors and door frames-

Existing window shutters will be kept and refurbished as and where necessary, Existing door frames will be retained but alterations will be required to frames and doors as all doors facing the central staircase will be required an upgrade to an FD 30 door for fire precautions and means of escape purposes.

ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSALS ON THE HERITAGE ASSET

In conclusion we consider that the proposals as detailed will have a major impact on the heritage asset, in that it will improve and enhance the building, and that NPPF 207 will be complied with, and also reflect good building practice.

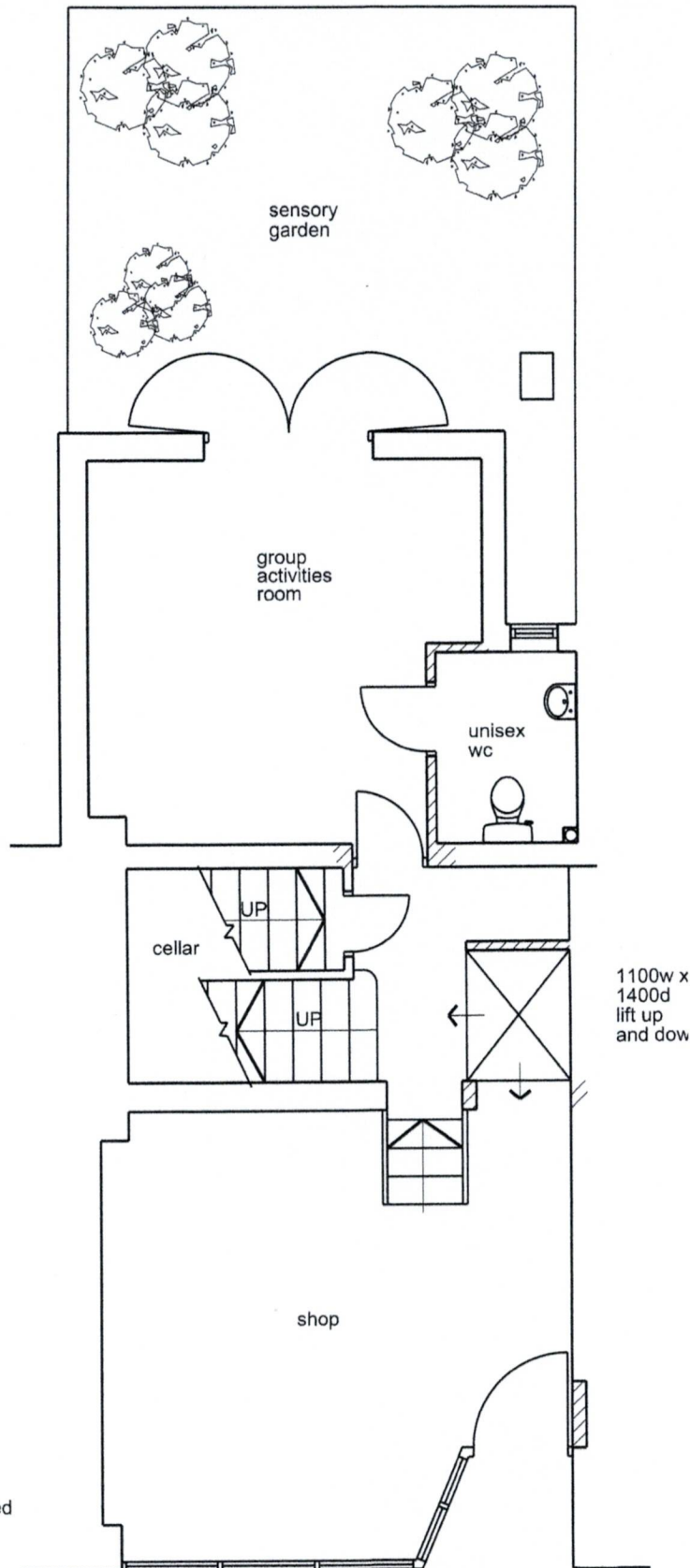
The significance of the affected elements as detailed in this statement, will be respected and some of the detailing and plans which have been carried out without Listed Building Consent in the building will be omitted from the works or altered to ensure that their incorporation/or not in to the overall scheme, will ensure that no 22 Lowther Street, is restored to its original designs.

The scheme as proposed pays attention to the public benefits of the project for users of the building, both staff and visitors.

It will also make a positive contribution to the Town Centre Conservation Area, and makes the building viable for its future use which will sustain and enhance its significance.

As such the proposals should be supported and approved.

Richard J. Lindsay
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31/8/26



Rev 06 aug 2026 Stair layout clarified
 Rev 05 may 2026 Client amendment
 Rev 04 may 2026 Updated
 Rev 03 apr 2026 Updated
 Rev 02 nov 2025 Updated
 Rev 01 oct 2025 First issue

SCALE

0 1m 2m 3m 4m 5m 10m

This scheme is subject to town planning and all other necessary consents.

Dimensions, area and levels where given are only approximate and subject to site survey. All dimensions are to be checked on site. Any discrepancies or variations are to be reported to the client before work commences. Figured dimensions only are to be taken from this drawing.

This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant consultation and/or specialist design documents and any discrepancies or variations are to be notified to the client before the affected work commences.

Client West Cumbria Society for the blind
 Job Title Proposed alterations to 22 Lowther St Whitehaven
 Drawing Title
Proposed ground floor

Scale: 1:50 @ A3
 Date: oct 2025 Drawn:
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