

HERITAGE STATEMENT (revised 26/9/26):

Section(i)

It is proposed to repair the brick wall, known as Love Lane, which forms part of the curtilage of Somerset House, Duke Street, Whitehaven.

As Somerset House is Grade II* listed, this section of wall, which measures 27ft long and 7.5ft high, comes under that listing, even though it is not joined onto the house, and was erected much later than the house itself.

The wall is believed to have been built in the early 1900s. It is visible on the 1923 OS map but does not appear on the 1898 OS map. It is free standing and not joined onto the earlier built house (1750). It lies on the left at the pedestrian Duke Street entrance-way into Castle Park.

The proposal is to repair this brick wall, which has weed growth, loose and missing mortar, broken render (*Details of repair method and materials given below.) Subject to acceptable design and availability of funding, it is also intended to apply a painted mural of a horse-drawn vehicle, also featuring a painted directional sign indicating it is part of the old historic route to Egremont.

Somerset House itself was built in 1750 by Samuel Martin, a wealthy tobacco merchant who traded with America. He had to sell all his assets after he was declared bankrupt after the American War of Independence. His Virginian tobacco estates were confiscated, he lost 10 ships, and his Whitehaven home would, in 1782, pass into the hands of Henry Littledale, a prominent townsman and a co-founder of the Whitehaven Bank, one of the first in the country.

Duke Street was named for King James II when he was Duke of York. It originates to around 1687, the time of Sir John Lowther. Historically Duke St continued eastwards following the old line of Love Lane, around the back of The Flatt (later to be known as Whitehaven Castle), leading up to Hensingham and on to Egremont.

This remained the main road until the mid-1700s when the end of Duke St was blocked off in front of Somerset House at the entrance to the Flatt grounds, now Castle Park. (Lowther Street was then extended along Flatt Walks, in front of the Castle, to give an alternative route to Hensingham and Egremont).

See below excerpt from William Jackson's *Whitehaven: Its Streets, Principal Houses and their Inhabitants*, dated 1878

Old maps show how the Love Lane route used to continue from the end of Duke St towards The Flatt (Whitehaven Castle) and then run behind it...

References

(i) Very early, c1699 PLAN of WHITEHAVEN by Andrew Pellin, shows Duke St continuing on behind The Flatt (now Whitehaven Castle)

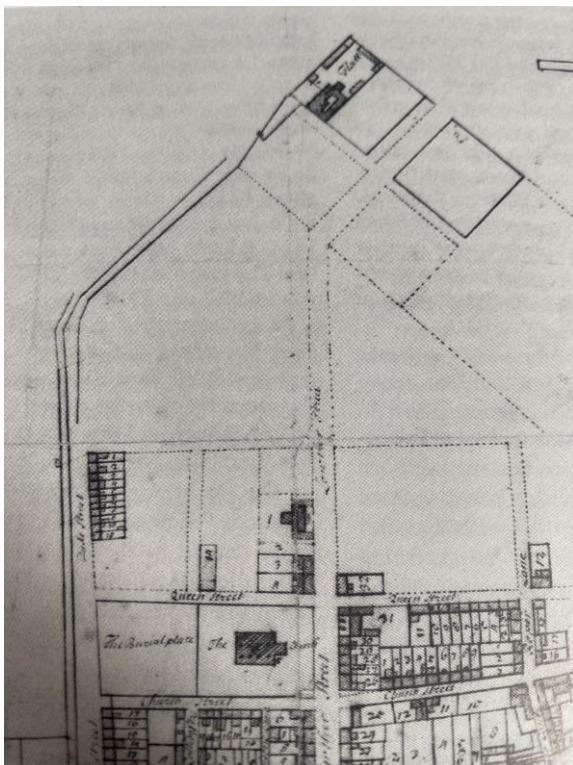
(ii) 1770 PLAN of WHITEHAVEN shows Love Lane link to Duke St and routed to the rear of The Flatt. (Cumbria Record Office)

(iii) An Excerpt from William Jackson's book "Whitehaven: It's Streets, Principal Houses and their Inhabitants" dated 1878.

In 1791, Somerset House, while under the occupation of Henry Littledale, suffered an episode of subsidence, due to old mine workings, which led to the rear garden of the property sinking into the ground.

After its time as a private residence, it served as the offices of the Cumberland Coal Company (Whitehaven) Ltd, 1937-1954. Then, while in local authority ownership (Cumbria County Council), it was the Whitehaven offices of the council's Social Services department until 2010, when the staff were moved out and into Blencathra House on the harbourside, formerly the Inland Revenue offices. Somerset House then stood empty for several years before being converted into seven modern apartments, which is still its use today.

(i)



(ii)



(iii)

poses, and the mansion, located on this very property, and if so, it proves the Johnson ownership. We just catch a glimpse of the corner of this mansion in the view of Whitehaven in 1642; the troop of pack-horses are coming from the direction of Hensingham by the ancient road which formerly ran at the back of The Flatt, and hence, by way of Love Lane, to the head of Duke Street.

Sir John Lowther purchased this property some time before