



**Change of Use of First & Second of Former Bank to HMO
Lowther Street, Whitehaven**

DESIGN ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

May 2025

This planning application is for Change of Use of part of the first and second floors of 71 Lowther Street, Whitehaven, The building was constructed as Whitehaven Bank and latterly become Natwest Bank before closing. The building extends over five floors to the street frontage with basement level, banking hall, and offices above. To the rear is a more modern single storey flat roofed extensions with two storey plant room to the rear.

The building has sat empty for a few years and the upper floors were leased to a local Accountants for fifty one years prior to the building being sold in 2024.

The property is not a Listed Building and carries no special designation. The LPA inspected the property in 2023 and sought not to apply for Listed Building Designation.

The proposed works will see the re-use of the upper floors of the property, formerly offices to create a large HMO. It is intended to work with the existing building and where possible all existing features are to remain.

Part of the ground floor plan is subject to a separate planning application.

Rear Office – this sits under the single storey rear extension, this has a concrete flat roof above with rooflights. The inset ceilings allow for heating and air ducting to transfer between the plant room in the two storey rear plant room and the main banking hall and offices. This area is to be stripped out of dado trunking and services. To the rear left hand side is the original ground floor bank vault, with 5' thick steel doors, this is to remain.



Two storey Service building bounding the rear of the site, Fire escape access across the flat roof. This building includes the plant room, toilets and staff room for the bank, this was constructed around 1970's. Fire Escape access is available on to the rear lane.



Rear view of the building at first floor area. The application site refers to areas behind the flat roof and features the first and second floors shown here. The third floor floor (round window) is not included



Internal feature between floors, Perspex infill to be replaced with fire resistant structure



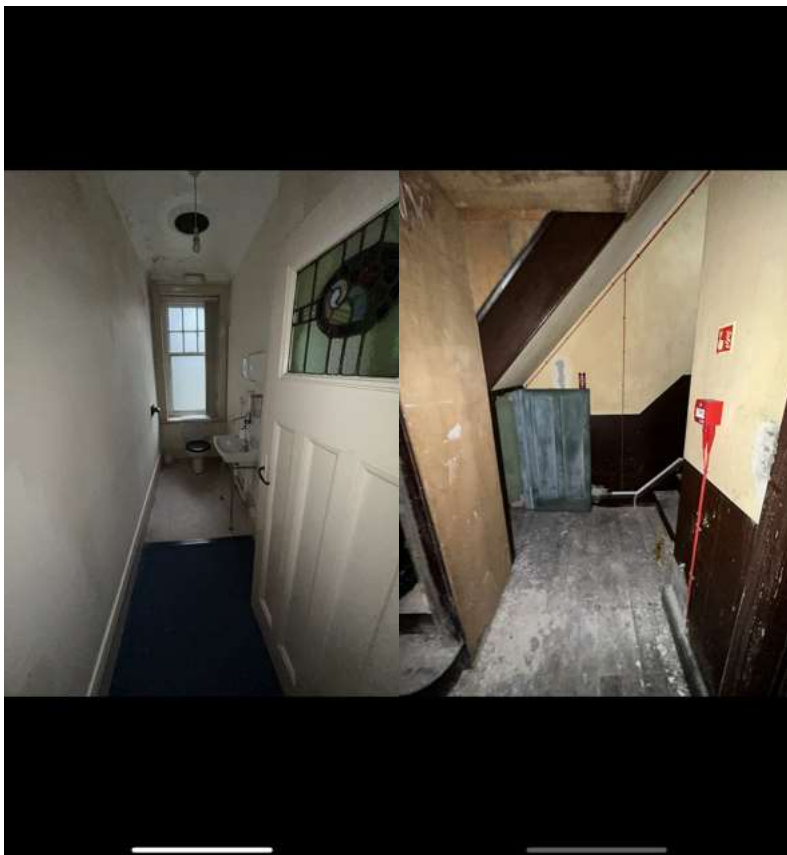
View from first floor with corresponding glazing in second floor ceiling – glass in roof position is now damaged



Servant bells display board historic and thought to have been re-located from another local property



Original fireplaces are to be retained within the new bedrooms



Original doors to be retained where Fire Regulations permit their retention. Original rear service stair serving the third floor

In conclusion the works only see to improve the existing building, retain an important building and bring back into use the upper floors which have laid vacant since the last tenancy ended. There is detrimental harm to the building fabric and the introduction of additional bathrooms are a requirement of the HMO licencing. The proposal is sensitive to the historic building and should be supported by the LPA.