

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO 22 LOWTHER STREET WHITEHAVEN CA28 7DG FOR WEST CUMBRIA SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND

DESIGN AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

SITE/ BUILDING

No 22 Lowther Street is in a prominent location in the centre of the town of Whitehaven, mid terrace and three storey height, with traditional materials rendered walls, timber sliding sash windows to Lowther Street, timber traditional shopfront and slated roof.

PROPOSAL

The proposal involves a reorganisation of internal rooms which currently are not suited to the applicants use of the building. Blind and partially sighted visitors have difficulty accessing the upper ground floor areas, and no disabled WC facility is available.

Office accommodation is not used efficiently and staff access from first floor to ground floor have to exit the building at the front on to Lowther Street and then enter the ground floor via the existing shop door, which is not really suitable.

An existing conservatory at the rear of the premises is underused and will be demolished to make room for a sensory garden with plants suitable for blind people to enjoy.

A new lift is proposed to access all levels of the building.

The shopfront is retained and upgraded using traditional details and materials but a new internal access from first down to ground floor is created, which has necessitated alterations to the existing shop entrance.

The proposals are required to update the internal layouts to make it more welcoming for both staff and visitors.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The building is located in the middle of the town centre conservation area, and is a listed Grade 2 structure. Its proportions are in keeping with its listed status, the building adds to the character of the terrace and the street view on Lowther Street.

ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED WORKS ON THIS SIGNIFICANCE

The vast majority of the proposed works are internal so there is no significant impact on the Asset.

The proposed alteration of the shopfront does impact on the asset but not in a significant way. It is an essential part of the improvement scheme as it will provide direct internal access between floors for staff, without having to access the ground and first floors by going outside on to Lowther Street.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE WORKS

The works are justified because the present building internally is not fit for the purpose of its staff and vulnerable people who visit the premises on a regular basis for help and guidance in connection with their disabilities.

The improvements and alterations will make the building user friendly, and provide a proper up to date centre for the Society.

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