

DEMOLITION OF SIDE ADDITION TO
UNION HALL, SCOTCH STREET,
WHITEHAVEN, CUMBRIA, CA28 7BJ

FOR

J DIXON & SON LTD

FOX LANE ELEVATION
(SIDE ADDITION)



HERITAGE STATEMENT

Project Reference: 5416
Date Prepared: May 2020
Prepared By: Andrew West BSc(Hons) MRICS MCABE MFPWS



HERITAGE STATEMENT

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I.0 INTRODUCTION

- I.1 This Heritage Statement considers the building known as Union Hall, Scotch Street, Whitehaven and the two storey side addition (located on Fox Lane).

Postal Address :

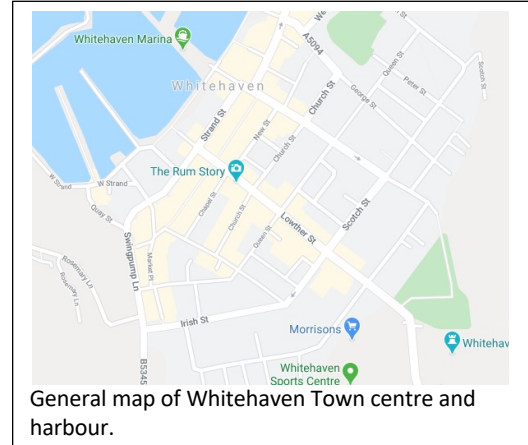
Union Hall
Scotch Street
Whitehaven
Cumbria
CA28 7BJ

This statement considers the heritage of the property in relation to the proposed demolition of the two storey (Fox Lane) addition. The purpose of this document is to illustrate an understanding of the heritage significance of the building / addition and describe how this has informed the reasoning behind the proposed demolition.

- I.2 This document is to be submitted to Copeland Borough Council, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent.
- I.3 Prior to the compilation of this document, early consultation have been had with the LPA Conservationist Officer, both in writing and in person (which included a walk through of Union Hall).

2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Union Hall is located on the corner of Scotch Street & Lowther Street. Scotch Street is predominantly a residential street, whilst Lowther Street has a strong commercial presence – both in retail, office and hospitality.



General map of Whitehaven Town centre and harbour.

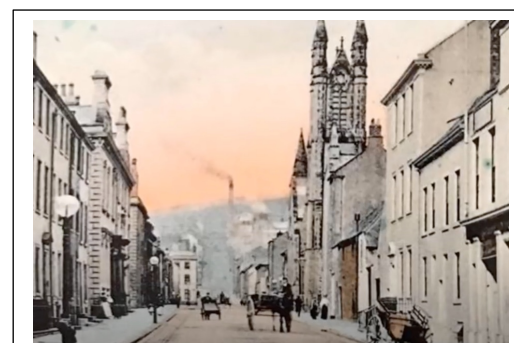
- 2.2 Union Hall is believed to date to Approximately 1814. Historic England state:

Elaborate Victorian building partly Used for civic offices. 3 storeys. Stuccoed, with rusticated quoins, heavy cornice on brackets, the end pediment / gables ornamented with shields and festoons, and crowned by panelled chimney stacks. 7 bays wide, irregular design, sash windows in moulded architraves with keystones, some with cornices. A Tuscan columned doorway with round arch and broken pediment. A larger doorway also with round arch and freestanding Composite columns on attached pedestals, supporting a frieze and cornice. Return side is No.7 Lowther Street.

Forms a group with Nos. 7 to 17 (consec) Lowther Street.



Image of Union Hall fronting Scotch Street prior to its external re-decoration.



Archive image of Union Hall to Left Hand Side.

- 2.3 Union Hall has been extended during the Twentieth Century to the North West (side elevation) by way of a two storey, pitched roof extension. The purpose of which it is believed was to provide self-contained living accommodation for the buildings caretaker.

The extension both in proportion and appearance is far less detailed or elaborate than the main building and is very simple in its façade.



Image of Union Hall with two storey addition fronting Fox Lane, following external decoration.

- 2.4 There are three exposed elevations to Union Hall with a minimal inner court yard elevation. Any original formal court yard to Union Hall has been lost by subsequent additions to the building and adjoining properties.



Image of the remaining open area to the rear of Union Hall at 1st floor level. Note the moss-covered corrugated roof encloses the 'yard' area at ground floor level.

- 2.4 Union Hall has a Grade II Listing for its special architectural or historic interest.

Its List entry Number 1336003.

Its National Grid Ref: NX9746618018.

Its Legacy System Number 76056.

- 2.5 Union Hall is currently vacant but has had a variety of uses during its time. Significantly the building has previously been in the ownership and use of Cumbria County Council, before being purchased by the current owners (applicants).

- 2.6 The two storey side extension has suffered from a serious and significant outbreak of dry rot. The infestation is for the most part currently confined to the extension, but adjoining areas of the main original structure are also at risk.

In consultation with the LPA Conservation officer, the extension has undergone a programme of initial stripping out works, which revealed an extensive infestation of dry rot to both timber and masonry elements of the extension – which includes the timber suspended floor structure, timber joinery, timber lintels, the timber staircase progressing into the masonry elements of the structure.



Image of the W.c within the two storey extension and the extent of the dry rot found therein.



Image of dry rot at low level, above the suspended timber floor structure.



Image of dry rot below the ground floor level, within the sub-floor void.



Enlarged image of dry rot.

3.0 SITE & AREA APPRAISAL

3.1 Site Organisation

Union Hall forms a group of Listed Buildings with No.'s 7 to 17 Lowther Street. Union Hall is located on the corner junction of Lowther Street with Scotch Street.

Other adjacent buildings sited on the road junction, include the Town's Civic Hall a modern structure circa late Twentieth Century and an imposing former Methodist Church building. The latter which is believed to be considered at risk.

To the rear of the Lowther Street building group, the properties have been heavily extended, circa 1970, to provide a large commercial / retail space. Forming a single department store with off-street parking.



Lowther Street group of attached Listed buildings.



Image of the Civic Hall.



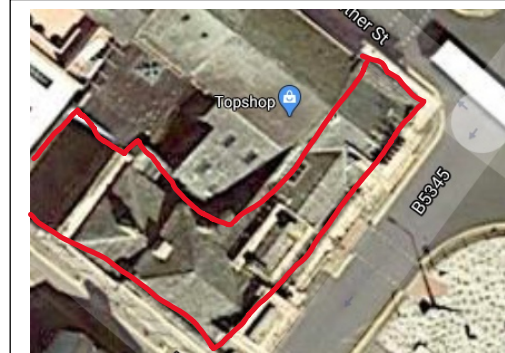
Image of the former Methodist Church building.



Image of the rear elevation of the Dixons Department store with Union Hall and the side extension in the background to the RHS.

3.2 *Site Boundaries*

The curtilage of Union Hall is defined by the building footprint and that of the side extension. There is also a small area of hard surfaced land to the side of the extension. There are no planted or soft landscaped areas associated with the building.



Aerial image of Union Hall and side extension outlined in red.

3.3 *Surrounding Land*

The land / areas surrounding Union Hall are given over to public pavements, the Highway and vehicle parking.

3.4 *Access Issues*

Union Hall is positioned within a Town Centre urban location and is open from the principal Lowther / Scotch Street elevations. A second entrance is located on the secondary Fox Lane elevation within the two storey extension. Traffic flow for Lowther Street, Scotch Street and Fox Lane is one way.

3.5 *Flooding Issues*

Union Hall is located within Flood Zone I according to the Environment Agency Flood Map (for planning).

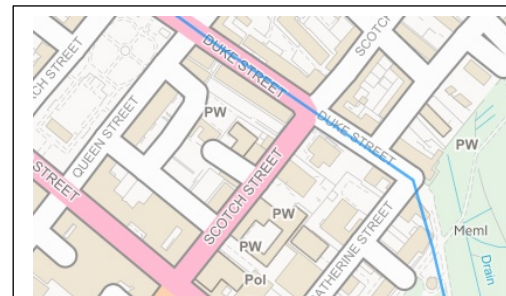


Image of Environment Agency flood map identifying Union Hall, located within Flood Zone I.

3.6 *Summary of Condition*

The external fabric of the building is in varying states of repair. The principal elevations to Union Hall and the extension have recently benefitted from a comprehensive programme of redecoration. However and importantly the slate roof covering to the structure is in a defective condition.

To the hidden (unseen) elevations the story is quite different. Above ground rainwater gutters & downpipes are in a deteriorating condition and are blocked with vegetation and debris. The painted external finishes to the rendered elevations have failed and are blistered and peeling. External masonry walls are saturated due to the ineffective rainwater goods, which has led to the saturation of load bearing timber lintels within the structure. External joinery is rotten and in danger of complete failure.

The issues identified externally have affected the internal condition of the building and have contributed to the dry rot issues now evidenced within the extension.

3.7 *Significance*

The original structure of Union Hall represents a surviving example of a significant town centre Victorian building, that contributes to the townscape and provides an important architectural asset to the Town of Whitehaven.

However, the two storey side addition adds very little to the architectural quality of Union Hall and it can be argued that the extension detracts from the overall impact of the original structure. Furthermore the condition of the extension threatens the long term viability of the original structure, due to the extensive dry rot problem.

Arguably, were an application to be submitted for the construction of such an addition be made now, it is extremely unlikely that the proposal would be considered as acceptable by the local planning authority when referencing their own design guidelines for the Conservation Area. It may well be deemed inappropriate and harmful to the character of the original Union Hall structure.

4.0 SCHEME PROPOSAL

4.1 CONCEPT

The intention of the proposal is for the demolition of the two storey side extension, which has fallen into a significant state of disrepair and provides a real and significant threat to the integrity of Union Hall and its original fabric.

The current owners have tried unsuccessfully to find an appropriate use and a sound business proposal for the building, in order to bring the building back into use, which is universally recognised as being to the benefit and long term viability for such a structure. In light of this, the property owners have tried to market the Union Hall, but this too has proved unsuccessful. It is believed that the condition of the building and its obvious issues are a major contributing factor as to why the building remains vacant.

This lack of interested parties and an appropriate use for the building only tilts Union Hall further toward deterioration and the potential for an important architectural asset to fall into the category of “at risk”, similar to the situation the neighbouring former Methodist Church building now finds itself in.

Although, it may be considered drastic the proposed demolition of the Twentieth Century addition with its rife and extensive dry rot problems would prevent the dry rot from spreading further into the original Union Hall structure and causing irreparable damage to the interiors and the main structure.

This would also enable the building owners to address the outstanding maintenance issues and to hopefully bring Union Hall to a condition which is attractive to the market. For example repairs to – the slate roof covering, defective rainwater goods and failing decorated finishes to timber joinery etc; would be addressed to

The proposal would also include for any necessary repair to the original side elevation of Union Hall on which the extension is attached, using best practice and agreed conservation methods for reinstatement. Returning the elevation to its original design.



Once the demolition, repair and reinstatement works are completed the land forming the foot print of the current extension would be made good.

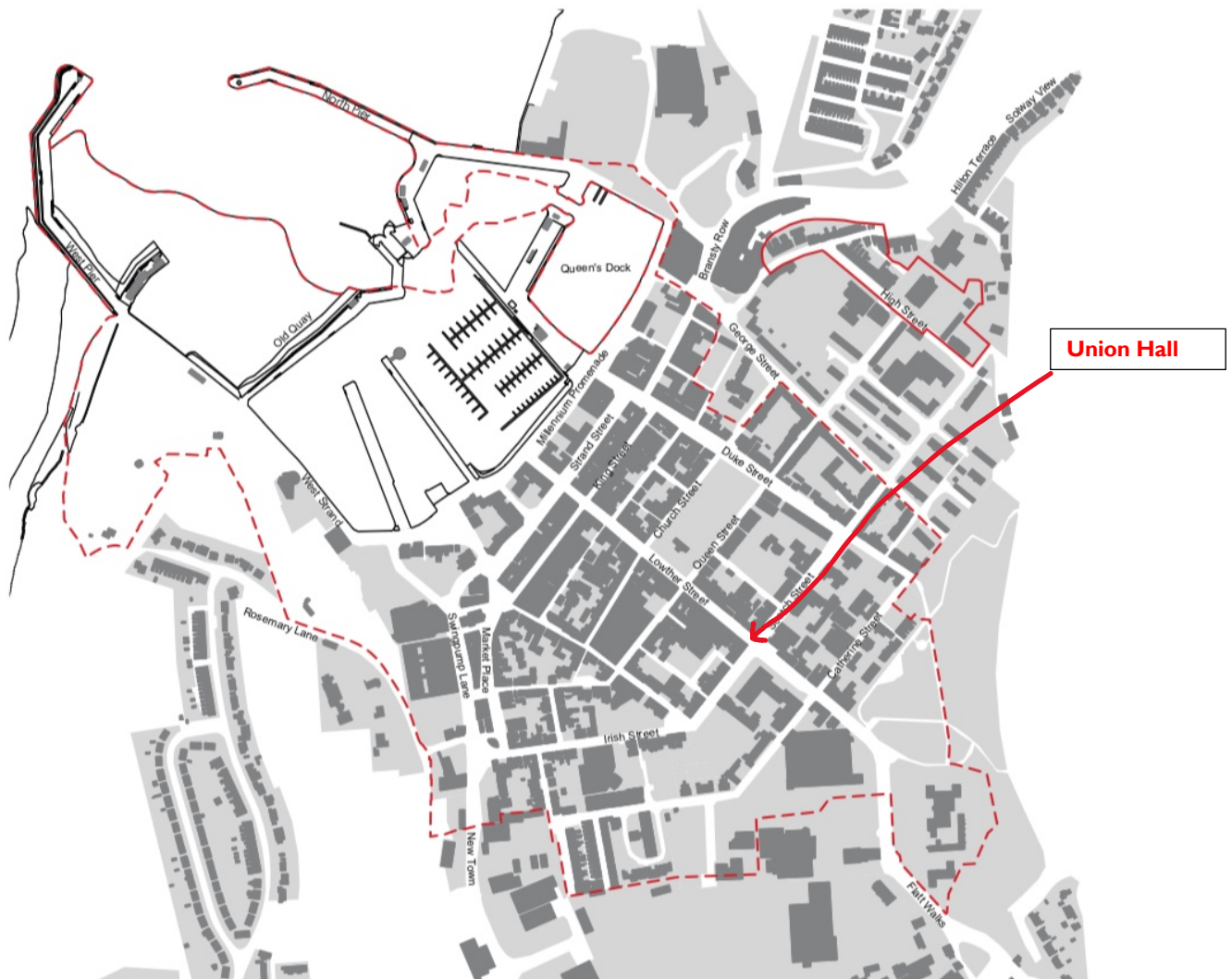
5.0 APPENDICES

5.1 Whitehaven Conservation Area Map

5.2 Union Hall – Listing Description

5.3 Excerpt from Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas | Management Plan April 2009

5.1 Whitehaven Conservation Area Map



5.2 Union Hall – Listing Description

Union Hall (IOE01/02982/02) Archive Item - Images Of England Collection | Historic England
17/05/2020, 16:47


Historic England

Search the site

Union Hall



Date: 18 Aug 2000

Location: Union Hall, Scotch Street, Whitehaven, Copeland, Cumbria, CA28 7BG

Reference: IOE01/02982/02

Type: Photograph (Digital)

Copyright IoE Mr Julian Thurgood. Source Historic England Archive ioe01_02982_02

Description

This information is taken from the statutory List as it was in 2001 and may not be up to date.

SCOTCH STREET 1.

1814 Union Hall NX 9718 SW 6/181

II GV 2.

Elaborate Victorian building partly used for civic offices. 3 storeys.

Stuccoed, with rusticated quoins, heavy cornice on brackets, the end pediment/gables ornamented with shields and festoons, and crowned by panelled chimney stacks. 7 bays wide, irregular design, sash windows in moulded architraves with keystones, some with cornices. A Tuscan columned doorway with round arch and

People & Organisations

Photographer: Thurgood, Julian

Rights Holder: Thurgood, Julian

Keywords

Stucco, Georgian Building, Victorian Unassigned, Local Government Office, Civil, Government Office, Trades Union Hall, Recreational, Meeting Hall, Recreational Hall

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/item/IOE01/02982/02>
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5.3 Excerpt from Whitehaven Town Centre and High Street Conservation Areas | Management Plan April 2009

Lack of Building Maintenance and Structural Issues

Through a probable combination of age, a lack of maintenance and structural issues, a number of buildings within Whitehaven town centre's conservation areas are now considered to be at significant risk.

Underuse and Vacancy of Historic Buildings

Several historic and extremely visually prominent buildings within the town centre are vacant or semi-vacant and have been for some time. They are now considered to be at significant risk. It is considered essential that these historic buildings are protected, preserved and enhanced to ensure that they make a positive and lasting contribution to the town centre's character.

