



## DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Cooke's Studios  
102 – 104 Abbey Road  
Barrow in Furness  
LA14 5QR



Alterations and  
Refurbishment of Existing  
Buildings

For Signal Film and Media

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V3

Job no. 21129



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## 1. DESIGN COMPONENT

### 1.1 Introduction

*This proposal is to unify and upgrade two existing buildings into one cohesive centre for arts and community work, which is publicly accessible, to further the excellent work and community benefits that applicant Signal Film and Media and the seven creative and community organisations it shares the building with are able to achieve.*

Cooke's Studios at 102 and 104 Abbey Road is located in the centre of Barrow in Furness on the west coast of Cumbria. The town has historic associations with the shipbuilding industry, and the subsequent loss of affluence as these industries declined.

Signal Film and Media are a charitable organisation who operate Cooke's Studios from their base at 102 – 104 Abbey Road. Cooke's Studios was formed to provide a centre for arts and creative industries where local residents, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, can access facilities and activities to develop a diverse range of creative, media and arts disciplines.

102 – 104 Abbey Road are Grade 2 Listed buildings, also known as Cooke's Buildings and Oxford Chambers. Since 2010 they have undergone various works to refurbish the buildings, including structural repair and the creation of connecting corridors between the two buildings on each floor, to bring them back into use for the benefit of the community.

Signal Film and Media has managed 104 Abbey Road for circa 12 years, with various spaces let to other third sector organisations based in Barrow at affordable rates. They have more recently taken over 102 Abbey Road, undertaking minor works earlier this year on a shoestring budget to enable some of the spaces to be used by more local creative and community organisations. It currently houses five of the town's most valued community groups working in the frontline with Barrow's hardest to reach and most vulnerable residents, with two more tenants due to join soon.

However, due to the limited budgets, time constraints and the fragmented sequence of development, the building's accessibility to the public is hampered by its current physical formation. The two buildings have become a 'rabbit warren' and hence do not work well as a unified centre for arts, media, culture & community. Inefficient use of space and compromised spatial arrangement limit what Signal Film and Media and other tenants are able to do in the buildings and this proposal aims to resolve this.

The issue is particularly evident on the ground floor at the front entrance, which is not welcoming and oftentimes confusing to visitors not familiar with the buildings. It has the physical barriers of a buzzer system that picks up street noise that makes it hard to hear; a heavy, difficult to open front door; a huge flight of stairs as the first point of circulation and a winding corridor with two fire doors and a further walk to the back of the building to find the lift. Feedback from the community evidences a lack of knowledge of what's in the building as a result of this layout and, for those who do find their way in, problems with navigating it stemming from its poor design.

Signal Film and Media would like to undertake a new phase of work to rearrange the ground floors of the buildings to create a new front entrance which is welcoming and inclusive, in order

to encourage new visitors and help existing ones; and to create new useable space by bringing the currently derelict basement and attic into use.

## 1.2 Amount, Scale and Layout

The proposed works compromise:-

- Alterations to the front façade, to make this more welcoming and accessible.
- Alterations to the rear façade, to allow this to be used as a secondary entrance, and to provide light into the building.
- Alterations to internal arrangement of the ground floor to form a reception area and café.
- Alterations to existing sanitary facilities.
- Renovation of the basement, including replacing the staircase at the front of the building to provide an alternative access and escape route.
- Renovation of the attic, including installation of a WC and shower and kitchenette.

### *Front Façade and Entrance*

The front façades of the buildings have previously been subject to works under previous applications. There was little of the original shop front left at the time of renovation, so the street frontages are modern (from 2011) but in keeping with the style of the building. However, there are two single entrance doors, one into 104 and one into 102. The entrance to 104 - the principal entrance - is narrow and leads into a very small lobby area. Access is controlled by an intercom on the adjacent wall, which is difficult to hear due to the traffic noise of Abbey Road in close proximity. The door is manually operated, making the entrance unsuitable for people with different access needs, including wheelchair users and those with pushchairs or walking aids. It cannot be used by those who are hard of hearing or have visual impairments and is discouraging to anyone new to the building as it is not apparent that the public are welcome in the building. The door opens into a small lobby directly into the main access stair for the building, which poses a security risk from tailgating.

The door to 102 is again a small entrance point that is typically only used for special events held in the ground floor of 102. Using the door is impractical and unsafe as it is frequently yanked open/slammed shut by high winds. It also allows cold air and wind directly into the open plan ground floor exhibition space of 102, making it difficult to condition this space for comfort or to be climate-controlled for particular exhibitions. Furthermore the existence of two doors in the façade causes confusion as to which door is meant to be used.

The proposals for altering the front façade comprise replacing part of the glazed façade and stall riser to 104 Abbey Road with an automated sliding door. The new door will be centrally located and on approach to the building will open automatically, making it clear for all that this is the entrance, and allowing all users to easily use the same entrance. The lobby will open onto a reception space which will be regularly staffed to provide visitors with an in-person welcome and wayfinding. The sliding entrance doors will include a level threshold.

The reception space will double as a café and an additional exhibition space and can be used as an introduction to the types of activities which go on inside the building. The central location of the reception assists in directing visitors around the building, as it links 102 and 104 and provides controlled access to the central staircase and lift at the rear of the building, which lead to spaces on other floors, and other tenant spaces on the ground floor, including the dance rehearsal space in 104.

#### *Rear Facade*

The proposals to alter the rear façade comprise replacing an existing exit-only door with a new glazed door and allowing this door to be used as both entrance and exit. This provides more flexibility with programming by providing alternative routes through the building, when separation of building users is desirable.

New high level windows are proposed to the rear elevation to bring additional light into the rear of this space, and will be combined with ventilation grilles as required for the spaces at the back of the building.

Small ground level windows and ventilation grilles are proposed at the base of the rear of 102 Abbey Road, to provide some light and ventilation to the 102 basement space.

The existing brickwork in the areas to be altered is modern brickwork.

#### *Ground Floor*

A critical element of the proposed alterations to the ground floor is the formation of a new opening between 102 and 104, to enable the central reception space to act as the central hub for all visitors and tenants, providing access to the café space in 104 and the exhibition space in 102. The reception/café space also provides WC facilities for the visitors to the 102 exhibition space so good connection between these spaces is critical.

Beyond the awkward existing entrance is a number of doors, one of which leads to the dance rehearsal spaces, and another which leads into the central corridor from which one of the tenant spaces is accessed. The central corridor is a very wide, inefficient and redundant space - the below stairs area is currently used for storage of sofas. WCs are accessed off this corridor and there is a large storage space which is currently empty. The lift, brew room, level entrance to the dance studio, the only access into 102 and access to the rear fire escapes all come from the lobby area at the rear of the central corridor.

To enable 102 to be used properly by the public, access to the WC facilities is needed. This is achieved by relocating the existing WCs to the left hand side of the 104 space which makes the accessible WC more comfortable to access. Locating the WCs on this side of the corridor allows for additional tenant spaces on the right hand side, and allows the central corridor to run straight through from the reception/café to the lift.

The kitchen and tenant spaces are proposed to be enclosed by partition walls with windows at high level to provide borrowed natural light from the new windows in the rear building façade. The kitchen will have a window facing the café to provide a visual connection between the kitchen

and café. The tenant and kitchen spaces will be partial height as 'boxes' in the 104 space, which has high ceilings.

### *Basement*

The basements of 102 and 104 Abbey Road are linked by an access door through the separating wall, with 104 forming the larger portion. Previous works saw the soffit in the basement underdrawn with fire resisting plasterboard to provide compartmentation to the building above. The lift comes down to the basement in 104, with an adjacent stair providing escape for both sides of the basement directly onto the street behind the buildings. The 104 basement is dry and generally used for storage. The headroom in this area of the basement is quite low, so the intention is to keep this area for storage, with clearer subdivision to allow separate storage areas for tenants to use. The area immediately in front of the lift is proposed to become a lift and stair lobby to provide an entrance area for the 102 basement space, should this be developed in the future as a usable space.

Opposite the lift, a new enclosed space is proposed which is intended to be used as a recording booth by the building's charitable tenants. Ventilation ductwork to provide fresh air and extraction is proposed to connect to ventilation grilles at ground floor level at the rear of the 102 basement.

The 102 basement has retained several original brick archways. Two of the archways have been replaced by a modern beam with the intermediate brick pier, rendered redundant, now at half height. The brickwork has been partially painted in the past with black paint. Two of the archway bays house redundant oil tanks, and are enclosed in fire resisting plasterboard to separate the tanks from the rest of the space. There is evidence of localised damp in the 102 basement, with open gullies in the floor for surface water drainage.

The proposals for the basement of 102 include the removal of the redundant oil tanks and installation of adequate ventilation to allow the space to be occupied in the future. The brick archways and brickwork lend the space a great deal of character and would be ideal for an intimate venue for performances – comedy and cabaret in particular. Alternatively we have previously received interest from artists and community performers interested in basement space. The proposals include a small kitchen area and bar to allow the basement to operate as a venue, with WC facilities on the ground floor above.

The stair at the front of the 102 basement space is currently in a poor state of repair and does not comply with the Building Regulations. The proposals include replacing this staircase with a new stair which complies with the Building Regulations, to future proof the basement for future use.

### *Attic*

There have been some works undertaken to the attic in recent years - the replacement of the dormer windows to the attic and the replacement of the existing extension to the level below, were done due to dilapidation of these structures resulting in water ingress. The attic currently has insulation boards fitted between the rafters, exposed brick walls, protective hardboard coverings to the floor and a plastered and a dry lined entrance lobby which projects into the room. The proposals include assessing the depth and suitability of the existing insulation, with the

intent to replace or upgrade with additional insulation if required, and to finish the ceiling with plasterboard and skim. The end walls below the windows are also to be internally lined and boarded to conceal make up timber framing below the windows. The side (gable) walls are proposed to be left as exposed brick, in line with the aesthetic of the rest of the building. The floor protection will be removed to assess whether there are original boards beneath, which will be lightly sanded and locally repaired as necessary. If the boards are no longer there, or are not suitable for use as the floor finish, the floor will be overlaid with a new floor, in a style to suit the salvaged flooring elsewhere. An enclosed shower area and WC will be installed, with a small kitchenette on the opposite side to form a brew area.

### 1.3 Appearance

The internal spaces for Cooke's Studios are stripped back in appearance, and reflect the fabric and workings of the building with exposed brickwork and services. Previous works have removed much of the later interventions and returned and restored the remaining heritage assets, such as the smoking room. New installations, such as display walls in the 102 exhibition space are freestanding and offset from the original walls to mitigate damage from changing displays.

The proposals for new works will continue in the same vein, leaving brickwork exposed where possible, and clean white plasterboard to soffits and new internal partitions. The ground floor includes glass screens and doors to maximise transparency, light and openness.

Externally, the existing shop fronts are glazed with grey painted stall risers and timber frames. The new sliding doors and glazing to 104 will be full height glazing, with the existing recessed entrance door brought in line with the rest of the façade to form an exit only door. The door to 102 will be replaced with a glazed door with the painted timber archway over, which is not original or in keeping with the building, omitted for a glazed panel to match the rest of the façade. The lower half of the door will be similar to the existing door, with a solid panel so that the door appears consistent with the stall risers to the rest of the 102 façade. The intent is that this door is not apparent from the outside, so the central sliding entrance door can more easily be read as the entrance to the building.

### 1.4 Sustainability

#### *Managing heat and damp for energy efficiency*

The buildings are of traditional solid brick construction with the internal face of the brickwork left exposed which allows the brickwork walls to perform as thermal mass, absorbing heat when the building is occupied and releasing heat at night. The exposed brickwork allows the wall to breath, allowing condensation internally to pass through the brick and evaporate externally over time.

Proposals to the attic space include reviewing the installed insulation for suitability, and increasing its thermal performance, through replacement, or underdrawing additional insulation to minimise heat loss through the roof.



Existing heating systems for the building will be adapted to suit the new layout. Where new heating elements are required, these will be high efficiency electric panel heaters or by adapted ventilation systems.

The exhibition space in 102 is proposed to be climate controlled, to achieve particular temperatures and humidity levels to allow the space to be used for exhibiting collections which have environmental requirements to be displayed.

#### *Renewable Energy*

Solar panels installed to the terrace space are proposed as a future investment asset to supply sustainable energy for the building.

#### *Lighting*

Lighting will be high efficiency LED lighting, controlled by presence sensors to conserve energy when spaces are unused. The lighting strategy is proposed to be flexible to allow building users to alter the lighting to suit the current function of the flexible spaces, create mood lighting appropriate to different events and allow for task specific lighting where required.

#### *Materials*

Wherever possible repairs will be made to existing materials, such as floor boards to reduce the use of new materials and resources. New flooring to the attic will be engineered timber boards which are FSC Certified. New plasterboard partitions will be specified to meet a Heavy or Severe duty rating for robustness.

#### *Reduction of water use*

New sanitaryware will be specified to be water-saving and WRAS approved, including WCs, showers and taps. Hot water is provided by point of use water heaters, local to each sink or shower to ensure only the water that is needed is heated, and reducing heat loss from long pipe runs.



## 2. ACCESS STATEMENT

### 2.1 Access to the Building

The building fronts onto Abbey Road, with a wide pavement providing pedestrian access from the town centre and the station which is a short distance on the other side of Abbey Road. There is a car park adjacent to the building. The rear of the building fronts onto High Street which runs parallel to Abbey Road. New access to the rear of the building forms part of the proposals.

### 2.2 Emergency Access

Access for emergency vehicles will be unaffected by the proposals.

### 2.3 Accessibility and Inclusivity

One of the primary aims of the proposed works is to increase the accessibility of the buildings for a variety of users. These comprise:-

- Level access to the front entrance, automated doors to allow ease of use and allowing the same entrance to be used by all.
- Induction loop fitted internally to support those with hearing aids.
- Avoidance of repetitive and obvious patterns to support those with visual impairments and sensory issues associated with dementia, autism and ADHD.
- Use of contrast and lighting, to support those with visual impairments and sensory issues as noted in the point above.
- Clear wayfinding signage, inclusion of braille for those with visual impairments on signage.
- Acoustic dampening to reduce reverberation to spaces with hard finishes / high ceilings to provide better acoustic comfort for those with hearing impairments and/ or sensory issues associated with dementia, autism and ADHD.
- Generous circulation spaces and door widths to the ground floor to allow ease of movement for wheelchair and walking aid users.
- Height appropriate section of reception desk and café servery to allow wheelchair users and those of short stature ease of use, for both visitors and members of staff. Sufficient space behind the desk / servery also to be maintained to accommodate members of staff in wheelchairs.
- Provision of accessible WC adjacent to other WC, to avoid differentiation between users.
- Simple route to lift to access other floors of the building.

It should be noted that the attic is, unfortunately, not served by the lift and is not accessible to all. It is proposed as a tenant space rather than a publicly accessible space or artist in residence space to limit potential discrimination.

### **3. HERITAGE STATEMENT**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

JCA were commissioned in October 2021 to complete designs and prepare an application for listed building consent and planning applications for alterations to 102 & 104 Abbey Road, Barrow in Furness. This document is to be read in conjunction with JCA drawings 21129-01, 07, 08 and 09 which together show the existing plans of the building along with proposals to make interventions to allow both buildings to operate as one venue.

102 & 104 Abbey Road are listed buildings appearing on the National Heritage List. They are listed grade 2. Adjacent to number 104 is the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel, also listed at grade 2. 102 & 104 Abbey Road lie within the Central Barrow Conservation Area, as do its neighbours.

The buildings are owned by Barrow Borough Council, and are rented by Signal Film and Media who sublet units. Signal Film and Media have converted spaces within the building for mixed use, comprising a multi-functional events space and dance studio on the ground floor and several letting units on the first floor.

Work to both buildings has taken place in phases since 2010, with 104 opening as Cooke's Studios in 2011. At this time, a programme of holding repair and remedial work was carried out to 102 Abbey Road under the control of the current owners Barrow Borough Council. In early 2021, Signal Film and Media took over 102 Abbey Road and carried out a 'light touch' series of interventions to bring the building into use.

The proposal is now to unify the two buildings into one cohesive centre for the arts, which is publicly accessible, to further the excellent work and community benefits that Signal Film and Media and its tenants have already achieved.

It should be noted that physical links between the two buildings already exist at ground, first and second floor levels.

As in the previous phase of work, the proposals to be considered are not intended to be an architectural 'restoration' of the building but a 'light-touch' approach that will focus on maximum retention of historic fabric whilst striving to secure the optimal viable use for the heritage asset, safeguarding its long-term future and benefiting the local community at the same time by adding to the excellent facilities that Signal Film and Media have already established at 104 Abbey Road.

During the previous phases of work, restoration and repair of the remaining historic fabric was carried out, whereas this phase of work proposes new interventions to improve the functionality and experience of the building, without impacting the heritage fabric wherever possible. Many of the proposed interventions are reversible additions to the building, causing no harm to the significance of the heritage asset. Where alterations to the original fabric is proposed, these are essential for functionality and offset by the benefit to the way the building could be used. The impacts of the alterations will be neutral, with no harmful effect.

This heritage statement is written in the context of the proposed minor interventions and a light-touch approach as well as the current significance of the heritage asset. We are lucky that in 2011 a full building recording was carried out by Greenlane Archaeology which records the building fabric at that time as well as providing a detailed history of its development and change over time. Therefore, this statement will not duplicate the findings of the Greenlane building recording and the reader is asked to refer to that document for further detail.

The level of detail contained in this report is proportionate to the significance of the asset, its current condition and the minimal interventions proposed to it. National Planning Policy Framework states that:

"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance."

## 3.2 Statement of Need

The following statement has been provided by Signal Film and Media (Signal).

Based in the heart of Barrow-in-Furness, Signal Film and Media is a charity which provides affordable, high quality community space for local arts charities, community groups and budding creative micro-businesses. Since 2010 Signal have spent over £700,000 in investment for the renovation of Cooke's Studios (104 Abbey Road) the four-storey listed building at 104 Abbey Rd, Barrow-in Furness, creating a centre for creative industries where local residents, particularly from disadvantaged groups, can access facilities and develop skills, for free, in a range of creative media and arts disciplines. Signal holds a 30-year head lease to Cooke's Studios, which is owned by Barrow Borough Council, on a de facto rent-free arrangement so long as the company fulfils the principles of its Memorandum of Association.

In March 2020 Signal raised a further £120,000 to spend on bringing some of the adjoining empty building, 102 Abbey Road, back into use.

In 2021, the opportunity to apply for Arts Council Capital funding arose which would allow the remaining undeveloped parts of 102 to be brought into use and for additional, more costly alterations to the buildings to be made to resolve critical issues with access, the entrance area and space efficiency, allowing the buildings to successfully operate as a single entity. In 2022, Arts Council awarded the project £490,000 in funding to carry out the works.

Cooke's Studios is home to: The Theatre Factory, which provides drama activities for **100s of disadvantaged and disabled young people each week**; Free Spirit Academy of Dance and Acrobatics, which provides classes and qualifications in ballet, tap, acrobatics and freestyle dance for **200+ disadvantaged young people and adults each week**; Signal Film and Media, an award-winning charity offering a year-round programme of film, media and arts activities to over **2,800 disadvantaged young people and isolated adults each year**; Cando FM, which provides a volunteer-led community radio station that engages people from all walks of life in sharing local

news and culture; and Furness Multicultural Forum & Youth Club, which provides essential support to refugees arriving at Barrow's new 'asylum hotels' and a range of ongoing initiatives and activities to improve community cohesion and reduce racism in the town, **accessed by dozens of people per week.**

**Our Vision:** A creative community - where talent is nurtured, and people thrive.

**Our Mission:** To facilitate affordable, sustainable, effective community spaces where people come together to learn and grow through the enjoyment and celebration of music, dance, theatre, art, digital media, and local heritage.

**Our Values:** Creativity and marginalised people are at the heart of everything we do - we are passionate about delivering high quality creative spaces and an inclusive, nurturing environment.

This quote below from a participant of one of Signal's activities neatly sums up what we are trying to achieve.

*"I look forward to coming here... it's not like anywhere else in Barrow - I'm allowed to do creative things instead of rotting away." - Sam, 15, NEET*

This project will transform what is currently an underutilised ground floor with low permeability to the public and confusing layout into a welcoming public entrance which is accessible to all, with a new reception, exhibition space and café. The ground floor layout will be altered to make better use of space, providing access to new WCs in support of the new public spaces to be created and maintain an area of lettable space. Further gallery-standard additions to the 102 ground floor will give these spaces greater flexibility, including the potential to attract a wider range of exhibitors by offering climate control. Black out functions will allow this space to be used for screenings. These spaces and alterations will encourage the public to engage with the building and the work of Signal Film and Media and the other groups which occupy the building and other groups to hire the spaces, thereby reaching more local people and allowing the building to operate more effectively as a vibrant, creative community space. The disused basement and attic spaces will be transformed into lettable spaces, with the potential for the basement to become a new intimate venue.

Currently, access into Cooke's Studios is through a single door via an intercom into a small lobby with no reception. It is not apparent the building is publicly accessible which creates a barrier to anyone new to the building. The second door into 102 is used during events but it is unsafe, and when this door is locked it causes further confusion as to which is the correct entrance and is off-putting to visitors. There is currently no connection between 102 and 104 at the front of the building, to allow a single entrance that serves all spaces (or separate way in and way out should Covid guidance be followed). The new entrance and reception will allow the building to operate in an accessible and Covid-safe manner by better accommodating social distancing, future-proofing the building for possible future pandemics.

The community engagement that happens in Cooke's Studios makes a positive difference to thousands of resident's lives each year. Signal Film and Media and all of the community groups based at Cooke's Studios are determined to provide their vulnerable beneficiaries with support,

mental and physical stimulation, escapism and hope in a worrying time where the escalating cost of living following on the heels of the pandemic is severely impacting people's mental health.

Alongside providing frontline services and access to skills for employment, our tenants utilise the healing power of arts participation as a way of aiding long-term recovery, reintegration and prosperity. The interventions proposed to Cooke's Studios will allow us to deliver our services to a wider and larger range of people, and provide universal access to the building to continue addressing the persistent need for good quality and affordable creative and community space.

This project will turn the disparate buildings of 102 Abbey Road and 104 Abbey Road into a multi-purpose, creative community venue: a space for our town's most disadvantaged people to come together, learn and grow through the enjoyment of film, music, dance, theatre, digital media, and their shared heritage. Cooke's Studios as it is currently configured is full to capacity and cannot accommodate all the creative and community groups who regularly approach us seeking space and support. This project will bring together two adjacent buildings in a timely, organic development that will provide a bigger, more accessible creative offer for Barrow. It brings new and extended arts activity all under one roof. The ongoing refurbishment of 102 Abbey Road spaces will breathe new life into a once proud Victorian building in the centre of Barrow-in-Furness to help our community to recover and thrive.

The unified building will include:

- A far more accessible entrance which is welcoming and inviting to all, including wheelchair users, those with mobility issues and those who are visually impaired, hearing impaired or neurologically diverse.
- A more efficient ground floor layout that critically allows the building to operate as a single entity.
- Improvements to the multi-use 1,615 square foot first floor space for community classes and workshops, exhibitions, and events with additional facilities including climate control, acoustic absorption and black out functions.
- A permanent, flexible exhibition space for local art, heritage, and community projects.
- Café space and public WCs.
- Lettable spaces in the attic and the option for future lettable spaces in the basement.

This project will make a real difference to the life prospects of thousands of acutely disadvantaged and isolated people, enabling them to develop skills, gain qualifications and improve their quality of life and wellbeing. Since the loss of its traditional shipbuilding industry our community has been gripped by high unemployment, ill health, substance abuse, domestic violence, and child poverty - Barrow is one of the 10% most deprived districts in England. Child poverty rates are at 48%. On the front-line we are seeing vulnerable people being exploited in criminal networks, a mental health crisis, and worrying spikes in drug related deaths.

This project will provide a safe and supportive environment for people to escape the limitations of how they see themselves and others see them, to recognise their own potential, to face the current cost of living crisis as they've barely recovered from the damaging impact of Covid-19 and

to imagine brighter futures. 12 years of working with disadvantaged people in Barrow has convinced us that this facility will make a real difference: An evaluation of one of Cooke's Studios key tenants found that many participants "had life-changing experiences as a result of their involvement."

Beneficiaries and outputs include:

- 5,000 disadvantaged people access creative participation/ learning; improving.
- employability, health, and wellbeing
- 50 creative/community/ educational groups use the facilities: reducing isolation and
- disadvantage and improving employability.
- 2,303sqft refurbished for the benefit of the community.
- 50 exhibitions/performances; improving access to cultural activity.
- 90% of hosted charities rate their experience as excellent or good.



### 3.3 Statement of Significance

In 1874, plans for the construction of 104 Abbey Road and what is now known as the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel were deposited with Barrow Town Hall. But whilst they did not include plans for 102 Abbey Road, the similar architectural style of the building is a convincing argument to the full block being constructed at the same time. The designs were completed by the Town Surveyor, Howard Evans, and the buildings constructed by William Gradwell.



Figure 1: photograph dated 1941. The windows of 102 Abbey Road and the adjacent number 100 (constructed in the late 1930's) are boarded over during the war. The sign over 102 at that time read Winder & Co.

#### *102 Abbey Road*

The building has had many uses during its lifetime, the first documented being a higher-grade school, the first in Barrow, between 1880 and 1889, on the first floor. The school use is likely to have led to its name as 'Oxford Chambers', the sign still being displayed on the building above the first-floor windows. Other uses continued during this period also including a grocer's shop on the ground floor.

Later occupiers included Winder & Co, and J Dempster, a wholesale tobacconist.



The adjoining building number 100 was constructed in the late 1930's and by at least 1991 had become a social club, incorporating the ground floor of number 102 through physical links created in the party wall, evidence of which clearly remains. Number 100 was demolished in 2011.

An archaeological desk-based assessment and building recording completed by Greenlane Archaeology of Ulverston in 2011 concluded four main phases of construction and alteration:

1. Initial building period including the larger block of number 104 and the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel.
2. Alterations, at an early date, to facilitate the use of part of the building as a school.
3. Alterations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, largely in connection with the heating system.
4. Alteration in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, incorporating at least the lower floors into the adjoining social club in number 100.

#### *104 Abbey Road*

It is not known what the building was originally used for and it appears to have been built speculatively. Later uses were varied, with its use during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century dominated by Cooke and Sons furnishers, the signage for which has been retained to the front façade. The buildings became known as the Cooke's Building and gives the arts centre now in occupation its name, Cooke's Studios.

104 is adjoined on the right-hand side by 102 Abbey Road, described above, and by the Duke of Edinburgh hotel on the left. The entire row was, according to a date stone on 104, built in 1875.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the building became a nightclub and thereafter fell into disrepair and dereliction. A programme of renovation was commenced by Barrow Borough Council in 2008 with Signal Film and Media taking over the building tenancy and opening Cooke's Studios in 2011.

An archaeological desk-based assessment and building recording completed by Greenlane Archaeology of Ulverston in 2008 concluded four main phases of construction and alteration:

1. Initial building period including the larger block of number 102 and the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel.
2. Alterations to enlarge the building, particularly the top floor.
3. Installation of the lift, between 1899 – 1949. Internal alterations, potentially removing fireplaces and blocking up hearths as radiators were introduced.
4. Extensive alteration, including installation of new partition walls, stairs and mezzanine floors.

### 3.3.1 The Buildings

#### Exterior

##### *102 Abbey Road*

The Abbey Road façade comprises a tall shop front with late 20<sup>th</sup> century timber framed windows with timber panelling above and below them. To the left of the windows is a modern single leaf door with a pointed arch window above it. The sign above the shop front reads "[Central Cigar Depot](#)", a remnant of a former use of the building. The first floor has three tall windows containing one over one sliding sash frames set below a sandstone frieze with a dentil carved edge. Above the windows runs a projecting sandstone hood mould with a band of black engineering brick above it. Above that a straight string course of sandstone runs below a panel of ornate terracotta tiles over which is the sign "Oxford Chambers" on encaustic tiles. The second floor has three windows, one over one sash frames with a continuous sill course and head course. The wall is topped with a corbelled parapet. The roof is covered with slate with a flat roofed dormer serving the upper floor.

The side gable is now blank where the adjoining building has been demolished. The masonry is now rendered. The rear, two storey part, is not rendered and the bricks are exposed. The painted mural remains:

["Winder & Co, Wholesale Tobacconists, Confectioners. Smallware Dealers."](#)

The rear elevation on High Street at ground floor level once contained a tall entrance to the building's rear loading bay. The brick pilasters with stone bases and heads remain but between them is infilled with 21<sup>st</sup> century timber window frames above rendered masonry panels. Above the pilasters is a sign of Winder & Co. Above that, there are five tall windows of one over one sash frames with a fixed light above, separated by a stone mullion. The top of the flat roof parapet has a black and yellow brick band just below the corbelled coping.

##### *104 Abbey Road*

The Abbey Road façade compromises a tall double width shop front, a contemporary glazed screen with timber stall risers, which sit behind original steel columns. The sign above reads "H. Cooke & Sons Ltd House Furnishers", a remnant of the former predominant use of the building. 102 and 104 appear as three terraces, with 104 comprising the two left hand terrace frontages. The two fronts of 104 are generally mirrored, with three tall central windows, with smaller windows with decorative arches either side, containing one over one sliding sash frames, fixed glazed panel above, and sandstone surrounds. Above the central sets of windows run bands of square terracotta glazed tiles four rows high. The second floor has four windows to each terrace, one over one sash frames, with sandstone surrounds which form a continuous lintel and sill, with decorative column mouldings in sandstone to either side of the central window. Above the central sets of windows are another set of bands of square terracotta tiles in two rows. Above these are the attic dormer windows. The right hand of which is a flat roofed, with three arched windows with brick panels below, sandstone surrounds and parapet over. The left hand dormer is pitched, with the gable facing Abbey Road and contains three pointed arch windows with sandstone surrounds, a date stone which reads 1875 over the central window, and round arch over all three. The gable is in brick, with a sandstone capping and decorative element at the apex.

## Interior

### *102 Abbey Road*

At the front, on Abbey Road, the building has five storeys including basement and roof space room. At the rear, there are just three stories including the basement. The rear half of the building is therefore contained below the flat roof section. The 2011 building recording by Greenlane Archaeology, describes their appearance at that time. The description below briefly describes the current appearance of the interior of the building, photos are included in the Photo Record in the next section.

The interior has been much altered from its original and previous uses so that now very little decorative finish remains. The interior is effectively a shell. On the ground floor, timber floorboards are entirely exposed, and all the plaster has been removed from the walls. Plaster ceiling soffits have all been removed, now replaced with plasterboard ceilings to provide fire resisting compartmentation between the floors. The lack of wall plaster exposes the large in-filled openings on the external wall, these are now covered by an independent lining wall for display boards. The shop front screen is plastered at the base, below the windowsill, and above the head. A prominent feature on the ground floor is the encased staircase. The lower part of the flight has been turned through 90 degrees to now run along the party wall, when once it had a half landing that turned to take the flight at right angles into the ground floor space. Four beams span across the space from outside wall to party wall, and all but the one closest to the Abbey Road frontage retains original(?) steel rod tensioning systems. No historic skirting, architraves, cornices or other fine detailing remain at ground floor level.

On the first-floor, part of the larger room on the Abbey Road side has a floor covering of lino tiles over the softwood timber floorboards. On the Abbey Road façade, the three timber framed windows are likely to be original and retain original architrave surrounds. The ceiling soffit is modern plaster board with a gypsum plaster skim finish. One of the better features of the building is the inner room with its timber boarded and vaulted ceiling that rises to a central lay light. Half height timber panelling, discovered stored loosely elsewhere in the building, have now been reinstated to one wall of this room. On the external wall a fireplace remains which would once have had an arched timber surround incorporated into the wainscoting. The rear wall of the inner room retains some lath and plaster and remnants of previous decorative schemes. Some historic plaster also remains on the brick chimney breast above the fire opening. The fireplace and remaining lath and plaster have been concealed behind acoustic plasterboard linings.

The first-floor rear room has exposed masonry walls on two sides and lath and plaster on the timber partition between it and the inner room described above. The lath and plaster has been concealed by an acoustic wall lining. The partitions to the rear corridor and stairwell are 21<sup>st</sup> century additions in plasterboard and gypsum skim finishes.

The attic has been partially renovated, with insulation boards fitted between modern rafters. There are dormer windows on both sides, which are modern replacements. The masonry walls are exposed, with timber framing visible below one window cill. The floor is hardboard, which may have been a replacement for decayed original floorboards, or may be concealing the floorboards.

The basement comprises a single room the full footprint of the building, with a connecting door to the 104 basement space. The floor is concrete, with masonry walls with various peeling paint finishes. Dividing the space along the centre is a series of brick arches. Two of the archways have been replaced by a modern beam with the intermediate brick pier, rendered redundant, now at half height. Two of the archway bays house redundant oil tanks, and are enclosed in fire resisting plasterboard to separate the tanks from the rest of the space. There is evidence of localised damp, with open gullies in the floor for surface water drainage.

#### *104 Abbey Road*

The building has five storeys including basement and attic, all of which were in a state of disrepair and dereliction prior to 2008 when the building underwent renovation by Barrow Borough Council. The 2008 building recording by Greenlane Archaeology describes the building's appearance at that time. The description below briefly describes the current appearance of the interior of the building, photos are included in the Photo Record in the next section.

Very little of the internal original features of the building remain. The walls are typically exposed brick, which allows the walls to breathe (and dry out, as the earlier renovation discovered severe issues with damp and water ingress in the building). Floors are typically original pine timber floorboards, which have been repaired where needed to match the original boards. The building features high ceilings which have been finished in plasterboard to provide fire resisting compartmentation between floors, services are typically exposed and run beneath soffits. The majority of original joinery has been lost, however, there are timber mouldings and arch headed openings adjacent to the top landing of central stair which have been retained. The staircase which runs up the centre of the building is likely to be in its original location, and has been sensitively repaired where needed to allow this to function as the main vertical circulation for the building.

### 3.3.2 Listing and Planning Policy

102 Abbey Road appears on the National Heritage List. It is listed at Grade 2. The listing reads:

708-1/5/22 SD16NE 06/05/76

BARROW IN FURNESS ABBEY ROAD (South East side) Oxford Chambers (Formerly Listed as: ABBEY ROAD Oxford Chambers and Cooke's Buildings)

GV II

Commercial buildings. c1875 (soon after Cooke's Buildings, qv). Red brick with ashlar dressings and terracotta ornament, slate roof. 3 storeys and attic, 3 bays. Altered ground floor with C20 shop front between original pilasters. 1st floor: sill band to tall sashes in recessed ashlar surrounds with decorative lintels set behind brick, pointed arches with hoodmoulds and blue-brick relieving arches. Decorative terracotta panel above with 'OXFORD CHAMBERS' on encaustic tiles. 2nd floor: sill and lintel bands link recessed sashes. Compound, brick corbelling to eaves. Flat-headed roof dormer of 10 lights; truncated end stack on right.

104 Abbey Road appears on the National Heritage List. It is listed at Grade 2. The listing reads:

708-1/5/17 SD16NE 06/05/76

BARROW IN FURNESS ABBEY ROAD (South East side) Cooke's Buildings (Formerly Listed as: ABBEY ROAD Oxford Chambers and Cooke's Buildings)

## GV II

Commercial buildings. Dated 1875. Red brick with ashlar dressings and terracotta ornament, slate roof. 3 storeys and attic; 2 broad bays each with 3-light window flanked by single-light windows on 1st and 2nd floors. High Victorian Gothic style. The 3-light windows have plain sashes (except attic), colonnette mullions and are set in recesses with mid-floor terracotta panels. Altered ground floor with C20 shop fronts between original pilasters. 1st floor: moulded sill band; 3-light windows have shouldered transom lights; single-light windows in recessed ashlar surrounds with decorative lintels set behind brick, pointed arches with hoodmoulds (cut back). 2nd floor: square-headed windows linked by sill and lintel bands. Attic: sill band. Bay 1 has stepped 3-light window with date beneath taller central arch; banded panel under pointed hoodmould; gable with moulded copings and finial. Bay 2 has similar window of 3 lights in dormer with hipped roof and finial; section of coped parapet to each side. Attic windows all have altered casements above brick infill.

National Planning Policy Framework 2019 (NPPF) covers the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment in section 16. NPPF makes it clear that the conservation of a heritage asset allies with securing viable uses and facilitating local communities:

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new develop.

NPPF goes on to discuss how 'harm' to heritage assets should be dealt with by local authorities:

193. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

This document will go on to demonstrate that the interventions proposed will cause very little harm to the significance of the asset and what harm that is caused is essential to optimise the ongoing occupation and use of the building, is less than substantial and arguably of neutral impact. Many of the interventions proposed will make a positive contribution to the significance of the asset.

NPPF continues:

196. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Relevant policies HE2 and HE3 of Barrow Borough Council's adopted local plan, which deal with development involving heritage assets, effectively mirror the clauses of NPPF section 16. The compelling argument in favour of the light touch interventions being proposed, as made clear in the statement of need (section 3.2 of this document) is that any harm caused to the significance of the asset (already stated as being negligible) would certainly be in the public benefit and will secure the optimal viable use for the building.

### 3.3.3 Significance

This section assesses the relative significance of the building and its significance in relation to the wider setting. Significance can relate to architectural quality, associated people or events, social history, and community value. Some of these values can be tangible such as any listed building grade, or they may be intangible such as the site's association with a past event, person, or cultural movement. Significance is a concept for measuring the cultural value of a place, using judgement to create a hierarchy of its differing components and aspects. This concept has been adopted by the various heritage bodies and is now the recognised method of informing the management of heritage assets.

The recognised levels of significance area:

- Exceptional - important on national to international levels, reflecting in statutory designations; Scheduled Ancient Monuments, grade 1 listed buildings.
- High – important at regional or possibly higher levels; grade 2 listings
- Medium – important at local level but sometimes regional level
- Low – assets of no more than local value
- Negative – intrusive features that detract from the overall value of the place.

We can take these levels of significance and adapt them to consider the value of each element of the building and the contribution it makes to the character and value of the whole:

- **Exceptional** – an element of outstanding interest
- **High** – an element of special interest, making a considerable contribution to the overall significance of the building.
- **Medium / Some** – an element of lesser interest, possibly altered or adapted.
- **Low** – only making minimal contribution to the overall significance of the building, possibly an element that has been considerably altered.
- **Negative** – an element that detracts from the interest of the building or directly threatens its overall significance.

Whilst the interior of the buildings have undergone a great deal of change, alteration and adaptation over their lifetimes, the exterior remains relatively intact in its original form. Most

external change has occurred on the rear elevation where the ground floor openings have been altered. For various reasons, the interior is now effectively a shell with very little architectural detail remaining intact.

The following is an assessment of the architectural significance of the building.

Element	Building	Significance
The exterior of the buildings, particularly the façade on Abbey Road which, apart from the shop front, has undergone very little change.	102 & 104	High
The remains of an internal room on the first floor with a timber vaulted ceiling, moulded ribbing, and dentil cornice. The wall panelling in this room has been removed but parts of it remain, stored elsewhere at first floor level.	102	Medium
The staircase from ground to first floor, whilst adapted at the base of the flight, remains in what is likely to be its original position.	102	Medium
Tensioned beams supporting the first-floor plate, visible from ground floor level.	102	Medium
Timber windows at first floor level on the Abbey Road façade, retaining original architraves.	102	Medium
The staircase from first floor to second is likely to be original.	102	Medium
An original brick chimney breast at first floor level, albeit with the timber panelled surround removed (stored in the building). What appears to be original plaster remains on the brickwork of the breast above the fire opening.	102	Low
The staircase at the front of the building to the basement, whilst sloping to one side, remains in what is likely to be its original position.	102	Low
Brick arches in the basement.	102	Medium
The central staircase from ground to third floor remains in what is likely to be its original position.	104	Medium
Timber windows to front elevation first and second floor.	104	Medium
Timber mouldings and arch headed openings adjacent to top landing of central stair.	104	Medium
Isolated skirtings and dado rails.	104	Low



An assessment of the significance of the wider site can also be made by considering the contribution the site makes to the character of the setting under certain recognised categories:

**Evidential** – what evidence of the history of the building and the site remains visible or could be concealed.

**Historic** – what knowledge of the building and the site exists in archives and what contribution to the significance of the site does that history make.

**Aesthetic** – does the building or site making an important contribution to the character and appearance of the wider setting.

**Communal** – an understanding of the contribution the building makes to the local community and the wider public, for instance a local landmark.

## Assessment of Significance

An assessment of the buildings and site under these category headings will help form an opinion about Significance based on statutorily recognised Heritage Values.

### Evidential Value

- The exterior of the buildings is relatively intact, particularly the front elevation despite the shop front being replaced with a late 20<sup>th</sup> century installation.
- The rear elevation has been much altered, particularly at ground floor level. The tall openings that were once access to a loading bay to 102 have been infilled with timber framed windows and blockwork at lower level, that said, the original appearance of the building can easily be interpreted. Internally, the ground floor plate has been extended over the loading bay area and modern floorboards are visible.
- Sign boards remain on the building, on the Abbey Road façade the sign 'Central Cigar Depot' and 'H Cooke & Sons House Furnishers' and on the rear elevation on High Street the sign 'Winder & Co'. The side elevation has the painted mural of Winder & Co also. The signs provide good reference to the previous uses of the building.

Conclusion: Externally, **high** evidential value with the relatively intact original exterior fabric of both buildings, particularly the elevation onto Abbey Road. However, the interiors have lost practically all of their original finishing details including partition walls, skirting boards, door surrounds, doors, wall linings and ceilings. As a result, the interior is classified as having **low** evidential value.

### Historic Value

- 102 & 104 Abbey Road is part of a block of buildings seemingly constructed speculatively but soon after having an eclectic mix of uses.
- No original records of 102 exist in the local record but the original plans for 104 and the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel are available.
- There is a good record of the building's uses, particularly the early use of part of the 102 building as a school, and the 104 building as a furniture manufacturer.

Conclusion. **High** historic value because of the good record of building uses.

### Aesthetic Value

- 102 and 104 form a block of buildings with the Duke of Edinburgh Hotel that have similar architectural styles clearly indicating contemporaneous construction periods.
- The façade onto Abbey Road is nicely detailed and well proportioned. The first-floor arched window heads with carved dentil lintels and hoods moulds are particularly attractive. The use of terracotta inlay tiles above the first-floor windows ties with similar detailing on building 104 adjacent. The corbelled brick parapet is also a nice feature.
- On the rear elevation, despite the ground floor loading bay opening having been infilled, the overall appearance is pleasing and ties well with the rhythm and architectural style of building 104 adjacent.
- In contrast, the interior has been much altered and practically all the original surface finishes have been removed leaving just a building shell with exposed brick outer walls, floorboards, and soffit-less ceilings.
- What original features remain (two staircases, some timber mouldings and arch headed openings, the timber vaulted ceiling of the first-floor inner room and some lath and plaster partitions) have been reinstated / repaired in previous phases of renovation.

Conclusion. Externally, **high** aesthetic value, contributing to the character and setting of the conservation area and the Abbey Road corridor. However, the internal aesthetic values are **low**.

### Communal Value

- The grouping is well known on Abbey Road and is sited on at a major crossroads of two important thoroughfares. As such, it is a well-known local landmark.
- Previous uses of the building have made strong contributions to the character of the town and sense of place. In this way, the buildings have well served the local community as a school, a grocer, a tobacconist, a social club, a furniture manufacturer and nightclub amongst many other uses.
- The buildings' current use as an arts centre and home to a number of charities continues to serve the local community, offering support to the disadvantaged especially.

Conclusion. **High** communal value for a major local landmark and a building that has served its community well over many years.

### Summary of Significance

The exterior of the building remains pretty much in its original form, particularly the Abbey Road façade, however some change has occurred to the rear façade on High Street that has slightly diminished overall significance. It is the interior where the building has suffered most harm where, due to successive alterations over its lifetime combined with a lack of maintenance in more recent years, most of the original fabric has been removed. So, whilst the exterior of the building can easily be classified as having **high** significance, making a strong contribution to local character, the building's interior in its current form is at best of **low** significance.

### Detailed Justification of Key Interventions

Clause 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that "Any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration[]), should require clear and convincing justification." Taking the opening between 102 and 104 on the ground floor as an example, the formation of the opening will require the removal of a quantity of brickwork from the wall and installation of a lintel over the opening to support the wall above. Both buildings have been altered from their original state previously, with much of the interior finishes and details removed, giving the interior of the buildings a **low** level of significance in all categories. The separation and operation of the buildings as two separate entities, sharing a party wall, we do not believe contributes to the buildings' significance as a heritage asset, and the formation of an opening in the party wall does not diminish the existence of the party wall dividing the buildings - it will remain easy to understand the buildings as two terraces. The physical material of the wall is also not of value in itself - the buildings are of brick construction which will remain readily apparent, with the bricks to be removed themselves being commonplace and not of particular architectural or historic interest. The bricks can be salvaged and stored on site for future use, should restoring the wall ever be required.

In terms of justification to form the opening, providing a connection between the two buildings at ground floor is fundamental to the continued operation of the Cooke's Studios Media and Arts Centre as a public venue. The intention behind the proposed renovation works, now funding is available, is to provide a public space to welcome visitors to the building and provide a space to communicate what the charities that operate there are all about, what services are available, and to increase participation in the arts by making this accessible and approachable. A key aspect of creating this space is forming a welcoming entrance, more detail of which is given below, which leads to a welcome / reception area in the centre of the building. The reception in 104 needs to have a clear visual and physical connection to the adjacent space in 102, to promote a clear route and journey through the building into the public spaces. The café in 104 provides a public space for visitors to remain and critically provides a reason to visit for those who may otherwise have not attended, or would not understand that the building and the services of the Arts Centre are for them. On a practical level, providing a single entrance point via a reception creates a control and welcome point, so each visitor can be appropriately directed, which, without the connection between the two parts of the building, would not be possible. This helps reduce current

safeguarding issues with unauthorised visitors finding their way into the building behind other visitors granted access via the buzzers.

With regard to clause 202, we believe the development proposals "lead to less than substantial harm" which "should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use". We trust the above assists clarifying how forming an opening at ground floor between the buildings is of both benefit to the public and securing the buildings optimum viable use. In the first instance, by improving access to the services Cooke's Studios offer and providing a public space for community benefit, and in the second, by providing space and potential for those services to expand and to reach more people through considered and deliberate reorganisation of space in the building.

Section 16 and 66 of the Planning [ ] Act 1990 note that the LPA should give "special regard to [ ] preserving the building [ ] or any features of special architectural or historic interest [ ]", as noted above; the wall where the opening is proposed is not, of itself, of special architectural or historic interest, nor does it contribute to the significance of the building as a whole. In the case of these buildings, it is their continued existence and the quality of their external features (primarily) which need to be preserved. This preservation is best supported by in turn supporting the continued occupation of the building and the viability of the charitable endeavour seeking to fund this alteration and currently acting as caretaker of the buildings.

The proposals also include the formation of a new opening in the basement, blocking up the existing opening; the new opening is proposed to create a new wider opening closer to the stair. It isn't clear whether the existing opening is a modern alteration or would have been original, however, it is not particularly wide and is located further into the basement which makes it less than ideal for use as the main entrance and exit to the basement venue from the stair and lift lobby. The new opening proposed incorporates a glazed side light, which both makes the door itself feel more generous and offers a glimpse into the space beyond, welcoming visitors into the space as opposed to facing a solid door as a barrier to entry. The deemed harm to the wall from a new opening is justifiable, as it allows the basement of 102 to be used as a venue, by providing a suitable entrance and essential access to means of escape via the protected lobby to the lift and stair.

Unfortunately, there are no surviving photographs or drawings of how the original shop fronts of 102 and 104 Abbey Road would have appeared, and the building frontage has been altered in the recent past without leaving much in the way of evidence of what had been there. Previous phases of work have revealed and retained the signage over both shop fronts, along with the wrought iron posts, replacing the façade itself with modern glazing and timber stall risers.

The new interventions of this application propose omitting the nib wall and recessed door previously installed, to bring the façade of the central bay of 104 into line, and introducing an automated sliding door in the centre of the central bay. The stall risers to the central bay of 104 are to be omitted, with the glazing running full height to provide visual consistency with the sliding door and differentiating the central bay from the left and right bays. Differentiating the central bay assists in reading where the entrance in the façade is, along with the central bay appearing more transparent than the adjacent bays with stall risers. Transparency is intended to read as 'open' and 'entrance', whereas the stall risers will read as 'solid' and 'closed'. This gives the

transparent central bay and full glazed sliding door prominence so it is made clear that this is the entrance.

Separate swing doors need to be retained in both 102 and 104 facades for escape, however, multiple entrances cause confusion for visitors as to which is the 'correct' entrance. Removal of external ironmongery and making each door consistent with the adjacent façade assists in 'disguising' these doors from the outside, whilst retaining their function from the inside.

The incorporation of the sliding door is intended to make the building more welcoming, by making how to enter clear and easy to navigate, increasing permeability into the building for the public. Critically, the sliding door provides an accessible entrance for all users and visitors which is a vast improvement over the existing entrance arrangement and will be a public and communal benefit to the building.

As there is no surviving evidence of how the shop fronts would have originally appeared, there is no harm or loss of significance posed by the proposed alterations to the façade, whereas there is a major benefit in terms of increased permeability of the façade, encouraging public access to the building, improved accessibility and, along with the ground floor alterations, better activation of the frontage.

### 3.3.4 Impact Assessment (Physical / Visual)

All change or intervention to a designated asset will have some degree of impact on the significance of the asset, its heritage values, and the public's enjoyment of it. To help assess impacts we can classify them:

Major Adverse Impact	An intervention of substantial change that would alter the appearance of the asset or change its fabric, to such an extent that would be considerably detrimental to understanding the significance and harmful to its character, and the setting of the wider area. Interventions that result in major adverse impact require robust and convincing justification to demonstrate that the harm they cause to the heritage value of the asset are worthwhile and in the public interest.
Minor Adverse Impact	An intervention that whilst causing some harm to the heritage values of the asset, does not substantially diminish its significance. Minor adverse impacts can often be justified as being beneficial to the public appreciation and enjoyment of the heritage asset.
Negligible Impact	An intervention that may cause change but to such a small degree that it would be practically imperceptible.
Minor Beneficial Impact	An intervention that would result in beneficial change, increasing public enjoyment of the asset, possibly removing later inappropriate additions, and revealing original detail or repairs to damage.
Major Beneficial Impact	An intervention that greatly adds to significance and public enjoyment of the asset often by reversing later additions that

	have substantially concealed or detracted from original detailing and overall appearance.
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The following table schedules the physical interventions that are proposed and evaluates the scale of the impact using the categorisations in the table above. For code locations refer to JCA drawings 21129-07, 08 and 09.

Code	Building Element	Proposed Intervention	Impact
<b>Ground Floor</b>			
G1	Abbey Road façade shop front (external 102)	Replace modern timber framed door and arched window above.	<b>Major beneficial.</b> In the context of the building and its setting, removing the pointed arch window would be a large improvement. Replacing the door to appear more in keeping with the rest of the façade will help the façade read better, emphasising the entrance in the central bay.
G2	Abbey Road shop front (external 104)	Remove nib wall and recessed door, replace with exit only door, replace modern stall risers with full height glazing and automated glazed sliding door.	<b>Major beneficial.</b> No harmful impact on the historic fabric, but greatly improves accessibility for all to the building and is critical to allow the ground floor of the building to become a publicly accessible space. Introducing a central, automated sliding door will make the building more welcoming to the public and those unfamiliar with the building and what it offers. Removal of the nib wall and existing entrance door will remove confusion by making it clear the sliding door is the main entrance, gives more space to the lobby internally and reduces the risk of tailgating.
G3	Relocation of 'Cooke's Studios' neon sign (external)	Relocate existing neon signage to central bay of front façade, stacking	<b>Major beneficial</b> Reconfiguring the signage will emphasise the central sliding

		'Cooke's' on top of 'Studios'	door as the main entrance, giving the front façade more clarity. The sign is currently set across the two 104 bays which makes it harder to read the whole of the façade (102 and 104 combined) as a single operation.
G4	Opening between 104 and 102 Abbey Road (internal)	Forming an opening in the brickwork wall between 102 and 104 Abbey Road, adjacent to the front facade	<b>Major beneficial</b> Minor damage to the original fabric of the brickwork wall, which will be knocked through and bricks carefully salvaged and stored for reinstatement at a later date. There is a great benefit to forming the opening as it will allow 102 Abbey Road to be accessed via the central reception space, which is essential to allow the building to operate as a publicly accessible building. The new opening, and glazed doors, will provide public access to the exhibition space, and access from the exhibition space to the WCs. The glazed doors will close on activation of the fire alarm to maintain fire compartmentation. The intervention constitutes minor harm to building fabric, but the harm is offset by the benefit to the communal significance and use of the building.
G5	Staircase enclosure, reconfiguration of entrance space (104) (Internal)	Reconfigure ground floor space to form reception café at the front, omitting the multiple lobby and corridor arrangement. WCs relocated to left side of 104. Kitchen and tenant spaces located on the right at the rear.	<b>Major beneficial</b> The current layout of the ground floor provides very little street presence or activation. Forming a publicly accessible reception / café at the front of the building makes the building more permeable to the public, encouraging greater participation with the



			<p>services the building provides. The reception space is a more inclusive entrance space and provides a welcome for visitors.</p> <p>The WCs become more easily accessible for all users.</p> <p>The kitchen and café provide the opportunity to generate income and provides additional facilities for tenants / user groups for activities within the building.</p> <p>The alterations make the route to the lift (for access to upper floors) easier to navigate, both visually and physically.</p>
G6	Front space (104)	Additional partitions and lobby to create office space	<p><b>Negligible</b></p> <p>Adding additional acoustic partitions and sound lobby will have no harmful effect on the existing fabric of the building and will allow the space at the front of the building to be more effectively used by a wider range of potential tenants.</p>
G7	Ground floor brew room (104)	Omit wall and door to front of brew room, replace with partial height screen	<p><b>Negligible</b></p> <p>Omitting the full height walls and bulkhead over makes the space at the rear of the building feel more open, and allows light into the deep plan space from the new windows proposed in the rear elevation.</p>
B1	Basement steps and doorway (102)	Replace / repair stair to 102 basement, increase size of landing at ground floor level.	<p><b>Major beneficial (future)</b></p> <p>The existing staircase is not suitable for access as there is no landing at the top of the stair and the stair itself is in poor condition. The proposals make good the stair and lobby by relocating equipment stored in the stair and making the stair itself safe for use,</p>

			should the basement be considered for use as a public, or lettable space in the future.
B2	Basement lobby (104)	Form lobby around stair and lift, form recording space	<p><b>Negligible</b></p> <p>No harmful impact to original fabric is caused by introducing partition walls and doors to form the lobby and recording space and this intervention is entirely reversible.</p> <p>Forming the lobby provides a protected space around the lift and stair, should the basement spaces be brought into use in the future.</p> <p>The additional space formed is proposed to be used as a recording studio, which increases the facilities the building offers to tenants and users.</p>
B3	Basement	Form new opening between 102 and 104 basement, block up existing opening	<p><b>Minor adverse</b></p> <p>Forming a new opening causes minor harm to the existing brickwork wall between the spaces. The brickwork removed will be carefully salvaged and stored for reinstatement at a later date. The harm is offset by the benefit to the functionality of the building, by locating the new door within the proposed stair and lift lobby. The new location of the door allows this exit to be located further from the stair at the other end of the basement, providing two routes of escape.</p> <p>The new opening will also allow the entrance to be made grander and more suitable as a venue / usable space entrance by being wider and incorporating a glazed side panel to improve visibility</p>

			between the space and the lobby.
G8	Free-standing display walls (102)	Freestanding, casted partial height walls for zoning the 102 exhibition space.	<b>Negligible</b> The proposed movable display walls / screens can be fixed in place by bolts with sockets located in the floor. The intervention will clearly be modern and discernible from any historic fabric. The intervention causes minimal harm with sockets discretely installed into the timber floors.
G9	Black out blinds (102)	Black out blinds installed to windows.	<b>Minor beneficial</b> The black out blinds will allow the 102 exhibition space to be made dark for screenings / special exhibitions, increasing the scope of exhibitions which can be accommodated in the building. The intervention is reversible with no harmful impact.
G10	Black out drapes (102)	Black out drapes suspended from soffit.	<b>Minor beneficial</b> The black out drapes will allow the 102 exhibition space to be subdivided into three areas, providing flexibility to provide larger or smaller spaces as required. The drapes will also provide soft surfaces in the exhibition space to reduce acoustic reverberation for performances / audible screenings. The intervention is reversible with no harmful impact.
G11	Improved ventilation for climate control (102)	Relocation of condensing units from basement to level 2 terrace	<b>Minor beneficial</b> Relocating the condensing units will require new penetrations through existing walls, floors and ceilings. The penetrations will be kept to a minimum, with all walls, floor

			and ceilings made good following installation. Providing services which allow the 102 exhibition space to be climate controlled increases the number and types of exhibitions which can be accommodated in the building – including items with special requirements, which otherwise may not be displayed in Barrow due to limited museum standard display space.
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Code	Building Element	Proposed Intervention	Impact
<b>First Floor</b>			
F1	Tiled flooring (102)	Restore tiled flooring	<b>Minor beneficial</b> Allocating some of the budget for the works to complete the restoration / repair of the original tiled flooring on the first floor will limit further deterioration of the floor so this can be seen and enjoyed by building users in the future.
F2	Staircase to second floor	Stair joinery improved	<b>Minor beneficial</b> It is not known whether this stair is original, however, it needs some repair to be made secure.

Code	Building Element	Proposed Intervention	Impact
<b>Attic</b>			
T1	New floor overlaid	Lay new floors over existing (modern) boarding	<b>Negligible</b> The intervention is entirely reversible and causes no harm to the original fabric of the building.
T2	Kitchenette, WC and shower		<b>Minor adverse</b> New penetrations will be required to provide services to these elements. However, the intervention allows an additional space in the

			building to be brought back into use. The shower enclosure will be constructed from independent wall linings so can be entirely reversible. The kitchenette can also be removed in the future.
T3	Lining system to exterior wall	Install a lining wall system offset from the brickwork and ventilated at the base and head.	<b>Negligible</b> The existing exposed brickwork stops short of the underside of the window cill, and is made up with timber frame and infill insulation. Replastering the wall would be expensive and would require a joint between the brickwork and timber frame. The lining wall will conceal the timber frame infill and allow for a reveal and cill to be formed to the window frame would cause no in no physical impact or loss of historic fabric.
T4	Ceiling	Underdraw insulation and plasterboard to modern ceiling rafters	<b>Minor beneficial</b> The timbers and insulation to the roof appear to be modern, the addition of further insulation and plasterboard linings causes no harm to original fabric and potentially improves thermal efficiency of the building by reducing heat loss through the roof. The intervention as well as interventions T1, 2 and 3, allow an additional space to be brought into use.

Code	Building Element	Proposed Intervention	Impact
<b>General</b>			
	Stairs	Recover all stairs with hard wearing floor finish.	<b>Negligible</b> The majority of the staircases in the building are currently

			<p>covered with carpet tile type commercial flooring. The proposal to replace this with a vinyl or linoleum poses no harm to the original fabric or significance of the building, and provides an ongoing hardwearing floor finish which protects the timber stair treads and risers.</p> <p>It is not known if the stairs in 102 from the first floor to second floor, and second floor to the attic are original. These stairs currently have no coverings. Introducing a hardwearing floor finish will assist protecting the treads and risers from wear.</p>
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### Impact Assessment Summary

Most interventions will result in beneficial or negligible impacts to the historic fabric. Where possible interventions will be reversible; where openings in brickwork are proposed, bricks will be salvaged and retained for future use as much as possible. The interventions that have been classed as causing minor adverse impacts can be robustly justified as offering public benefits as they are vital to opening the building to the public on a more regular basis and thus securing the ongoing viable operation of the building as an arts centre.

### 3.4 Photo Record

	<p>001</p> <p>The glazing and timber stall riser in the central portion of façade (104), is to be replaced by a full height glazed screen with an integrated sliding door. The sign above will remain.</p> <p>The modern nib wall and recessed door will be omitted, and replaced with a glazed exit-only door in line with the rest of the ground floor facade.</p> <p>The existing neon signage will be reconfigured to sit in the central bay between the columns.</p>
	<p>002</p> <p>The existing façade of 102 Abbey Road has been designed and installed to suit the style of the building, and to reflect what had been there originally without recreating it.</p> <p>The proposal is to omit the timber arch over the door.</p>



	<p>003</p> <p>The corridor which runs alongside the staircase is a waste of space and uninviting.</p>
	<p>004</p> <p>The corridor at ground floor of 104 Abbey Road (the centre of the combined buildings) is underutilised. This area of the ground floor of 104 is valuable ground floor space which is currently used as a corridor and storage space. Existing WCs are on the right of this photograph.</p>



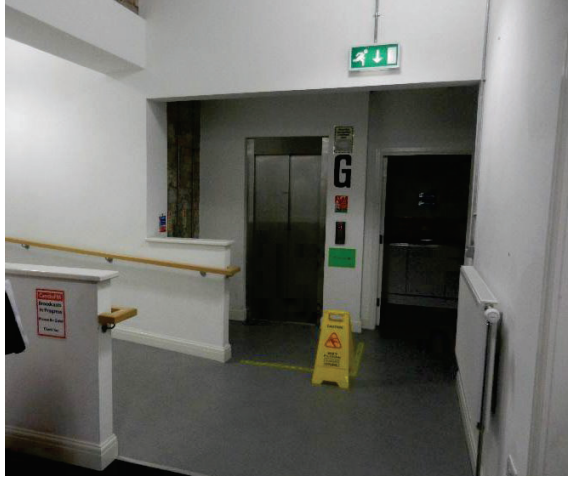


005

Unused storage space in the centre of the building could be better utilised. Proposals include internal alterations to the layout, which will see this space become a useable, lettable space.


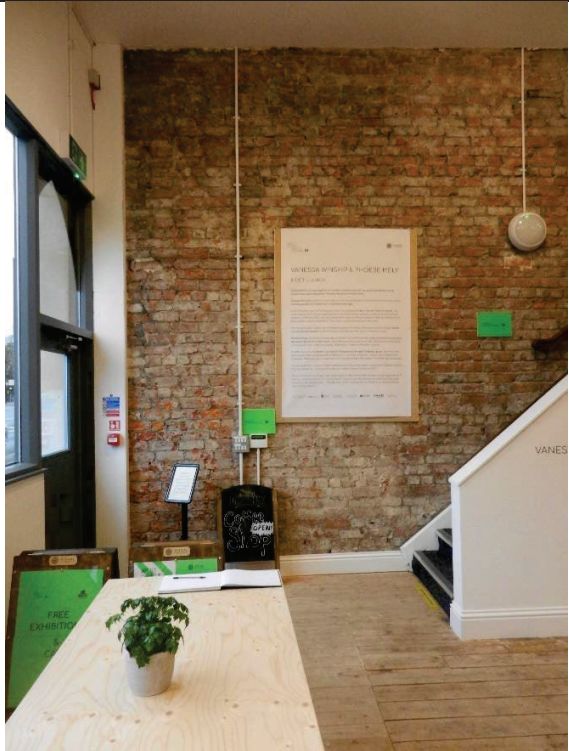





006

Existing 'standard' WC is formed with a cubicle system. Gender neutral self-contained WCs should ideally have full height partitions and doors. The accessible WC is accessed off the lobby, making it more difficult to access in a wheelchair. The proposals will make both WCs more easily accessible.

	<p>007</p> <p>Lift access to other floors is located at the back of the building, via the central corridor. The new proposals will make the route to the lift simpler to find, easier to navigate and will help put the activities which take place in the building on show.</p> <p>The brew room is to be opened up, with new windows introduced at high level to provide light into the rear of the building.</p>
	<p>008</p> <p>The rear of the building has previously been infilled with sections of modern brickwork and ventilation grilles. The proposed replacement of the door in the central bay with a glazed door and new signage to make the rear of the building into a secondary entrance. The ventilation grille above will be replaced by windows with ventilation grilles above, to bring light into the ground floor space.</p>
	<p>009</p> <p>The ground level at the rear of 102 is below the internal ground floor level, providing the opportunity to add high level clerestory windows and ventilation grilles to the 102 basement.</p>



	<p>010</p> <p>The minor works undertaken to 102 Abbey Road earlier in 2021 were a light touch. The walls had typically been stripped of original plaster some years ago, as part of the works the brickwork has been left exposed and treated with a consolidant that does not change the appearance of the wall. Floorboards were left unstained to retain their original appearance.</p> <p>The plasterboard to the soffit was introduced to provide fire compartmentation between the floors. Services are exposed.</p>
	<p>011</p> <p>An opening is proposed through the pictured wall to connect the ground floor 102 exhibition space to the new reception space, via a glazed door which will be held open when the building is open. Bricks removed to form the opening will be salvaged and stored where possible.</p>

	<p>012</p> <p>The exhibition space at the rear of 102 Abbey Road. On the right the independent lining can be seen in front of the original brickwork. The lining walls allow displays to be changed without risk of damage to the original brickwork.</p>
	<p>013</p> <p>The door below the staircase leads to the basement steps. The proposals move this door further away from the top of the stairs to create a landing.</p> <p>The original steelwork with tensioning bars can be seen at high level. These have been treated with a white intumescent coating.</p> <p>Black out drapes suspended from the soffit are proposed to enable sub-division of this space into 3 sections.</p>
	<p>014</p> <p>There is a pop-up temporary coffee shop at the front to the ground floor of 102 Abbey Road, which is used during events.</p> <p>The new proposals will form a permanent servery for the café in 104, to allow this space to be open and used daily. The café is a key element in encouraging the public to visit the building by clearly illustrating the building is for the public. Once inside, visitors can find out about the activities on offer which will encourage engagement with the arts.</p> <p>Locating the café in 104 allows the full extent of the ground floor of 102 to be used flexibly.</p>



015

The stair to the basement currently has equipment installed in the stairwell which will be relocated to allow this stair to become an access / egress route into the basement in the future.






016




The stair to the basement at the front of 102 appears to be the original stair, however, the steps slope considerably towards the wall making the stair uncomfortable and potentially unsafe to walk down. Some risers are open, which is not in line with current guidance for staircases.

The proposals include rebuilding this stair, relaying the original steps so they are level, and infilling the open risers.



	<p>017</p> <p>The basement of 102 is currently disused, but has the potential to be a lettable space, or an evening venue or exhibition space.</p> <p>The black paint to the brickwork arches is a later addition and is proposed to be removed to expose the brickwork.</p>
	<p>018</p> <p>There is an existing doorway between the 104 basement (pictured) and 102 basement. The proposals include relocating the door to better work with the proposed layout of the basement, and increasing the width to make a grander entrance.</p>
	<p>019</p> <p>The smoking room in 102 contains some of the best remaining elements of heritage significance internally. The timber boarded and vaulted ceiling has been redecorated. The central laylight can be seen above.</p>



	<p>020</p> <p>Timber wall panelling had been removed from this room, and stored elsewhere in the building. The previous works saw this reinstated and restored. The inner room is now used as an additional exhibition space.</p>
	<p>021</p> <p>The attic has previously been stripped back to the original brickwork walls, dormer windows replaced and modern rafters and insulation fitted.</p> <p>The proposals include replacing or underdrawing additional insulation to limit heat loss through the roof. The soffit will be finished with plasterboard and skim, with returns to the window frames. The end walls below the windows will be independently lined and insulated.</p> <p>The brickwork will remain exposed, treated with consolidating coating, which will not change the appearance of the brickwork.</p> <p>The floor will be overlaid with carpet tiles.</p>
	<p>022</p> <p>Some areas of brickwork in the attic have considerable deterioration of mortar. These areas it is proposed to remove loose material, repoint in lime based mortar and apply consolidating coating as elsewhere.</p>



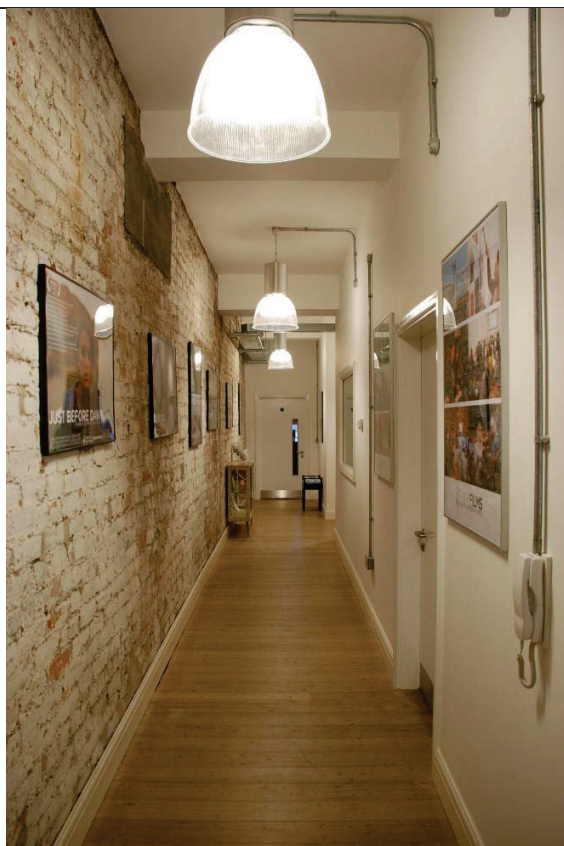
023

The fireplace surround leaning against the chimney breast may have originated from the 104 attic space. A brickwork arch is visible behind the surround. It is proposed to leave the brickwork chimney breast and bricked up opening for the fire exposed.



024

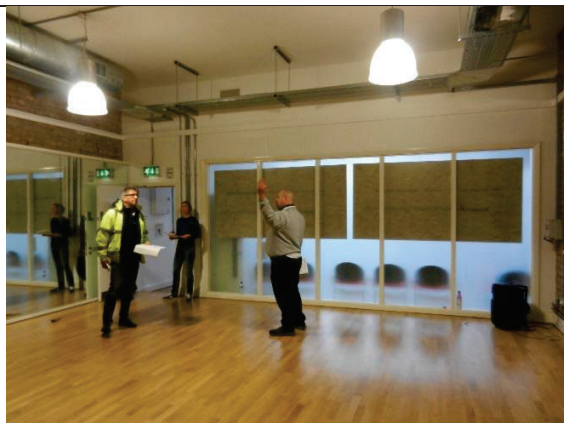
On the opposite side of the attic another bricked up fireplace can be seen. It is proposed to leave the brickwork and bricked up fireplace exposed.



025  
Completed areas of 104 Abbey Road  
Second floor corridor.



026  
Completed areas of 104 Abbey Road  
Workshop space.



027  
Completed areas of 104 Abbey Road  
Dance rehearsal space.

End of report.