

Design and Access Statement
St Hilda's Colliery Head Stocks, South Shields



MAWSONKERR
Architecture & Sustainability

1.0 Introduction:

On behalf of Tyne and Wear Building Preservation Trust (TWBPT) MawsonKerr Architects are submitting an application for the refurbishment of St Hilda Colliery Head Stocks in South Shields. This Design & Access Statement forms part of the planning application and is to be read in conjunction with the Heritage Statement, drawings and other reports.

The head stocks built in the mid 19th Century is an important building in the history of South Shields and also mining safety reform.

The building is currently underused with only a handful of open days to the public each year. A partial refurbishment was carried out in the 1980s however the main roof is structurally failing and this proposal allows for the protection of this heritage asset and brings it back into use for the community and promotes job creation.

The refurbishment of the building provides start up units for Small Medium Enterprises and areas for community use and exhibition space for the history of the head stocks to be displayed and accessible to all.

The design has been developed in collaboration and consultation with South Tyneside Council the Art & Heritage Officer, planning department and conservation officer; the Harton & Westoe Miners Banner Group and Tyne & Wear Building Preservation Trust. Other members of the community have also been supportive of this project and funding has been secured through the Heritage Lottery Fund, Architectural Heritage Funding and other local funding organisations in order to deliver this exciting project. Further open days for the public are being conducted in June and August in order to display proposals and generate public interest.

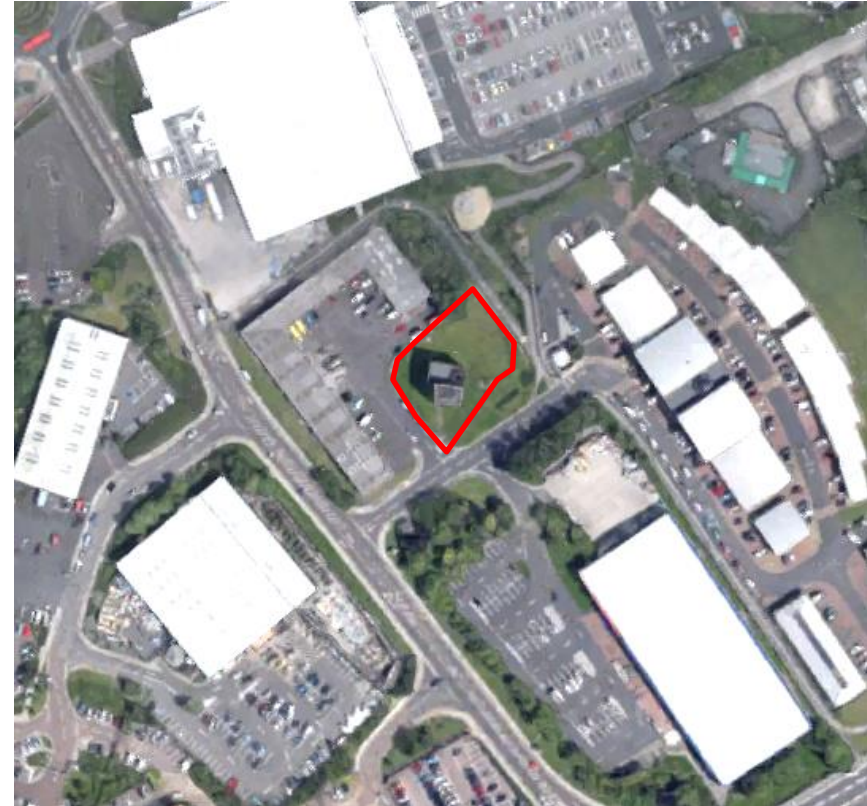
1.1 The Site

The area of South Shields that the Head Stocks sits within was once used mostly for industrial uses with mining and ship building surrounding the structure. The area is a retail park with the pithead the lone remnant of the industrial past sitting amongst the large retail and light industrial units.

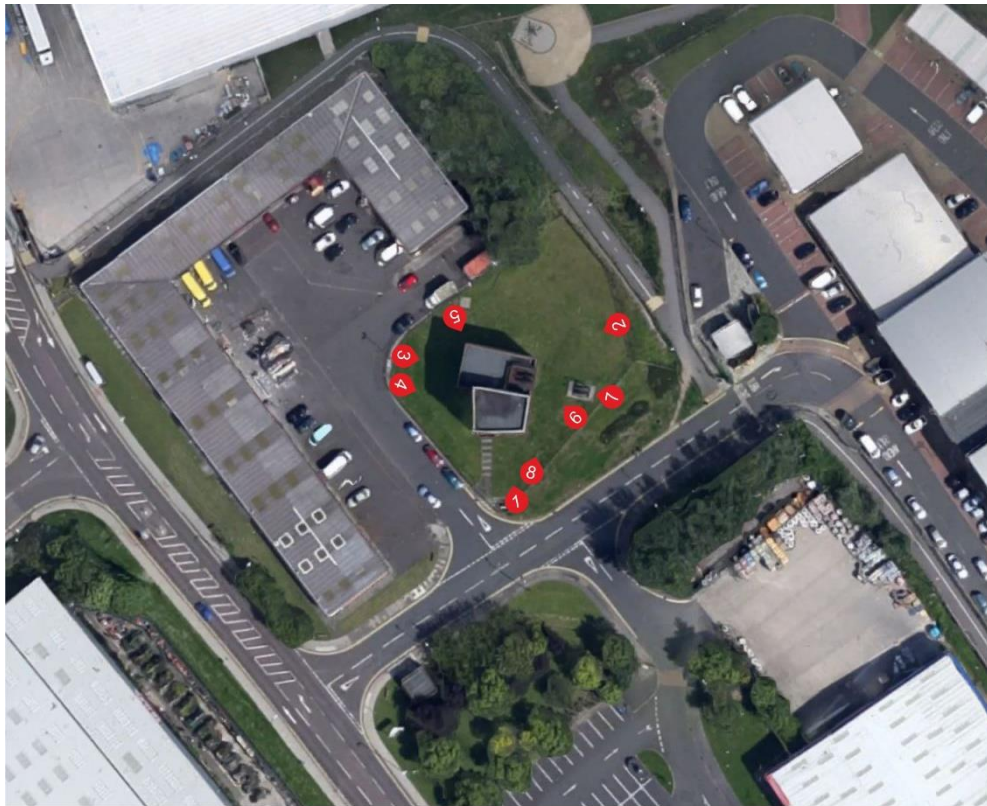
Beyond the immediate retail units is the town centre to the East and the River Tyne to the West. The head stocks is located centrally in South Shields with both the City Hall and South Shields Metro less than half a mile away.

The location enable impressive views from the top deck of the building. To the West towards the North Sea can be seen the town centre. To the East can be seen the river Tyne with the Ferries of North Shields and the industrial cranes of Wallsend.

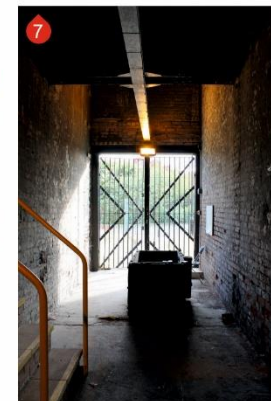
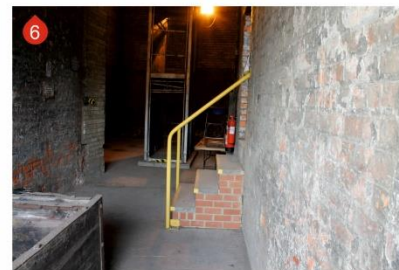
The building sits in its own grounds with perimeter fencing. These grounds allow for the opportunity of additional starter units and interpretation areas which will be described as part of this statement.



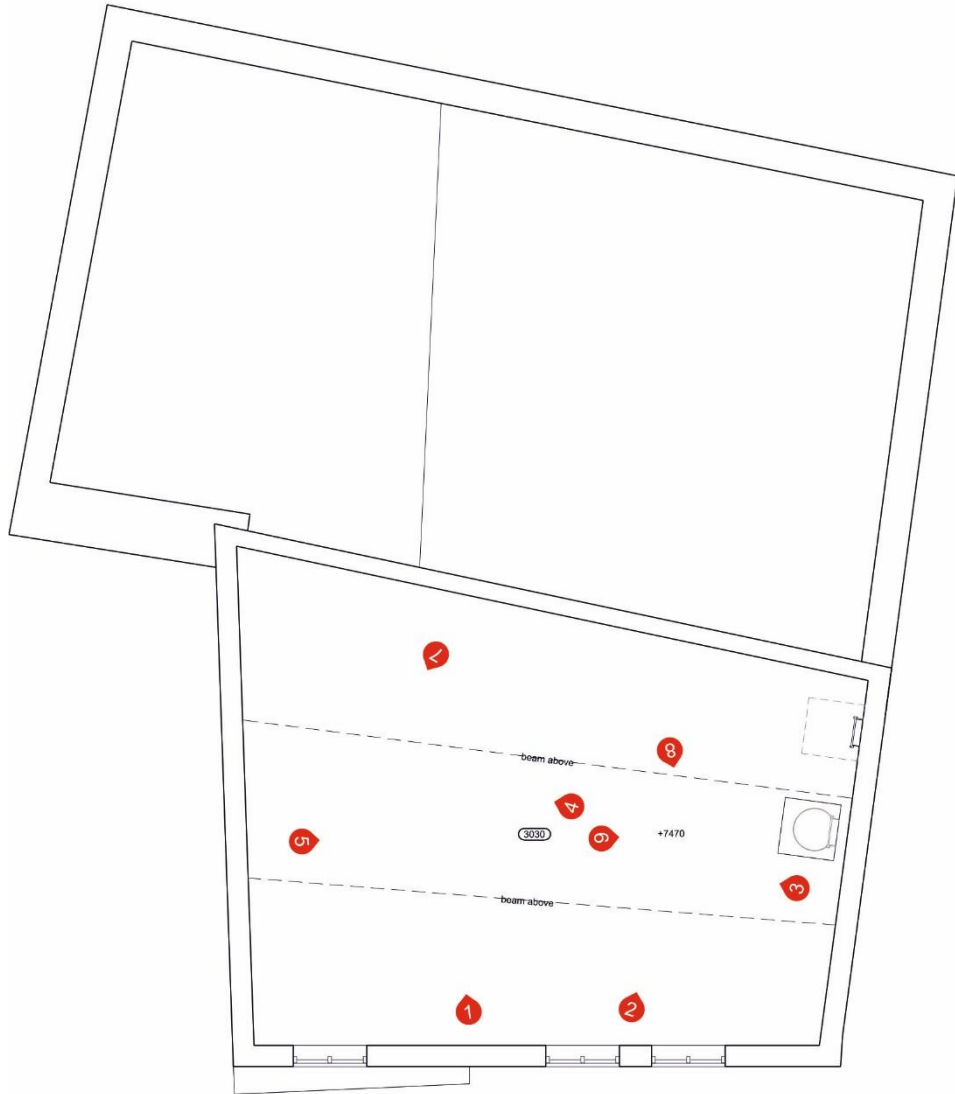
1.2 Site Photographs



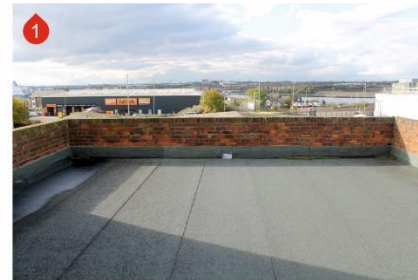
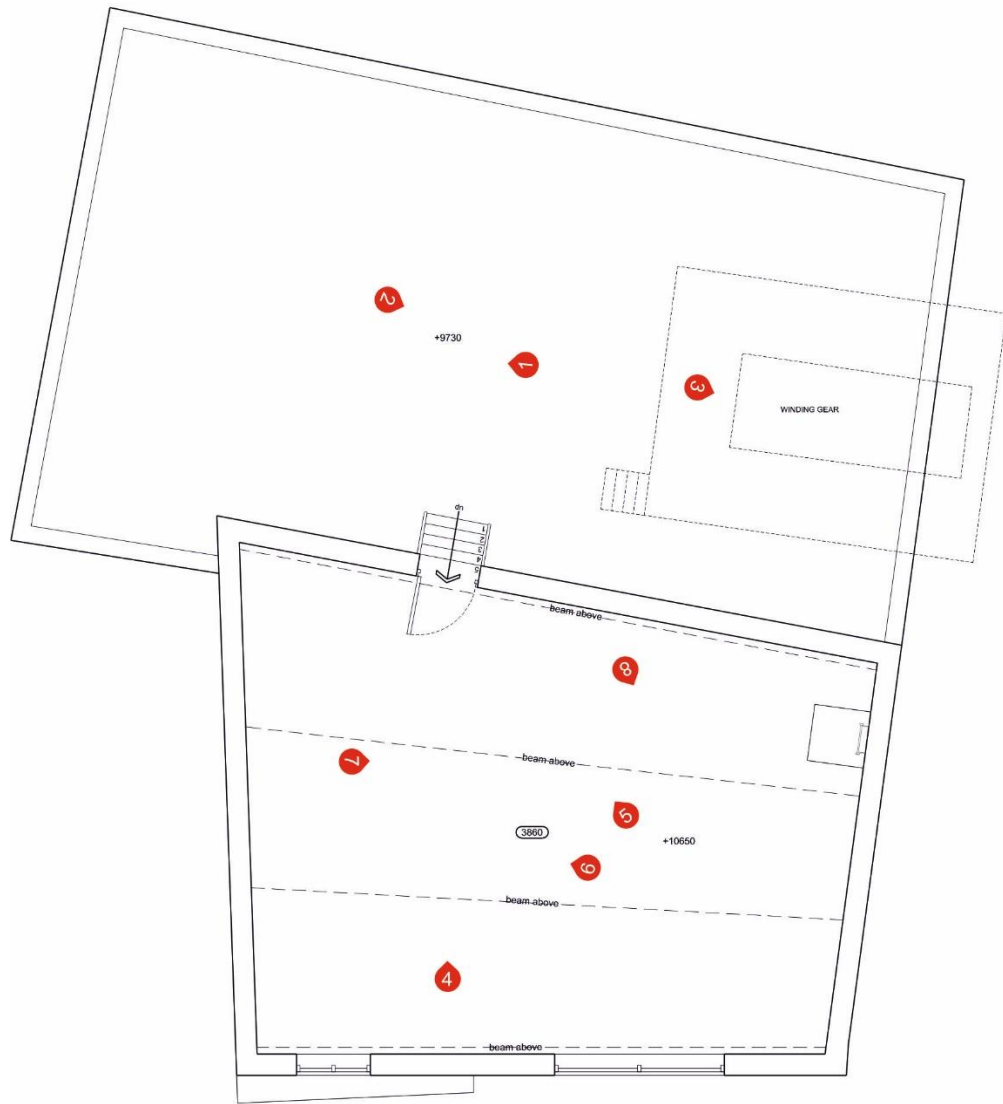
1.3 Existing Building Photographs – Ground Floor



Existing Building Photographs – First Floor

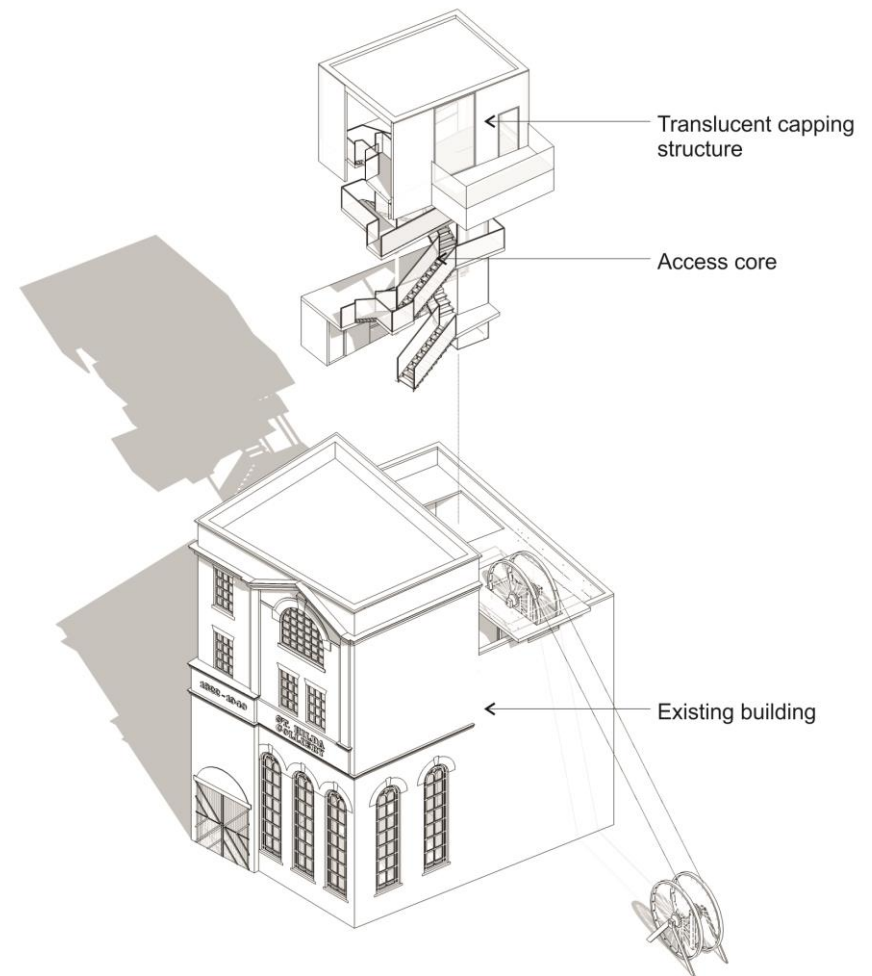


Existing Building Photographs – Second Floor and Roof



2.0 The Proposal

The proposal is for a new staircase and lift core to be inserted into the building. This enables access to the floors previously only accessible by ladder. This new access core will be capped in a translucent structure which will allow natural light into the triple height space on the ground floor. This glazed element will provide panoramic views around South Shields and will also be a place to view the historic winding gear which remains on the roof. This access core will facilitate the installation of interpretation which will explain the history of the building and mining, existing artefacts such as the lift cage will also be displayed within the building. Parts of the building will be used as start-up units/artist studios, a small kitchenette will be provided for use of the occupants within the building. Accessible toilet facilities will be provided for both the visiting public and occupants.



Axonometric of Proposal

2.1 Site Strategy

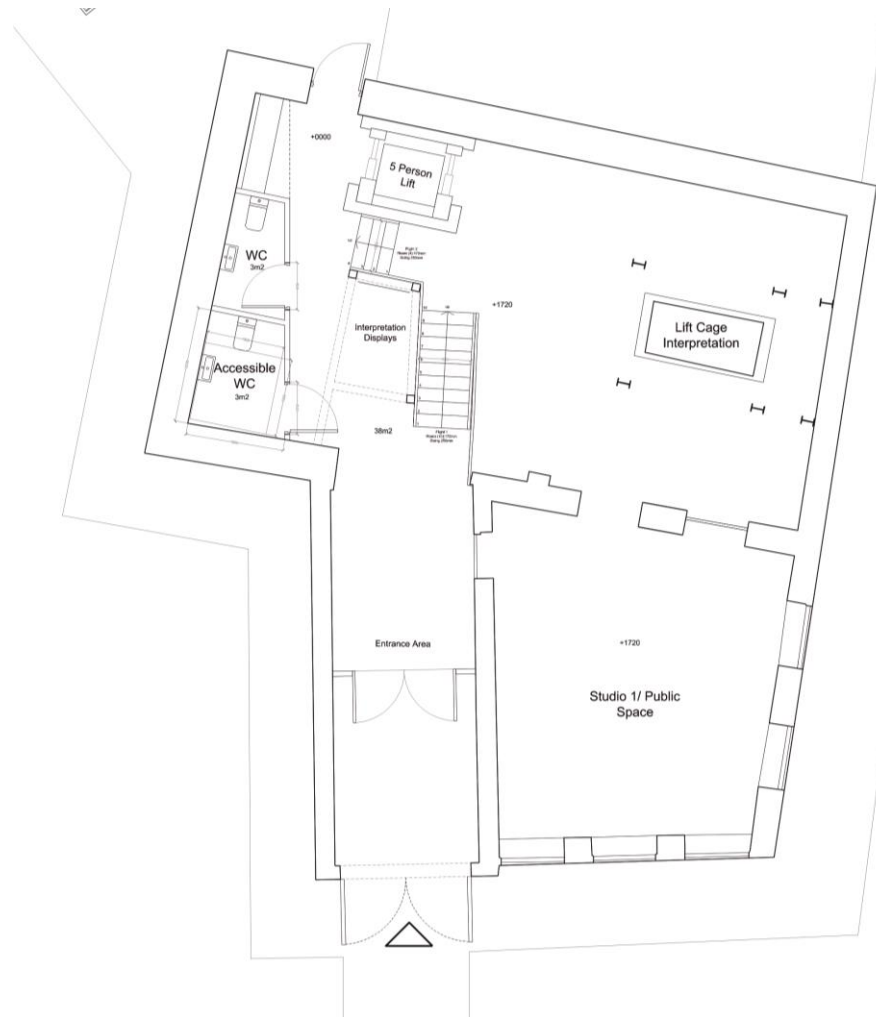
It is proposed the curtilage and site would remain largely the same as grassed area. To the North of the site 6no. parking spaces are located with direct access to the road. Cycle parking will be located within view of the main entrance and the existing fence will remain but will be repaired and

repositioned around the parking area. As part of phase 2 it is proposed that starter pods would be located within the grounds of the pithead, these will also have access to the internal facilities. These starter units would be lightweight but robust and industrial in character and would have minimal impact on the landscape to the curtilage of the building.



Site Plan

2.2 Amount and Layout



The existing building as two distinct parts, the winding house to the North and the pumping engine house to the South. The winding house this is a triple height space housing the mine shaft and lifting gear with blank facades. The pumping house is the southern part and is the main frontage for the building and is split into three floor with different scale of space and large windows to each space. The upper floors are currently accessed by a ladder.

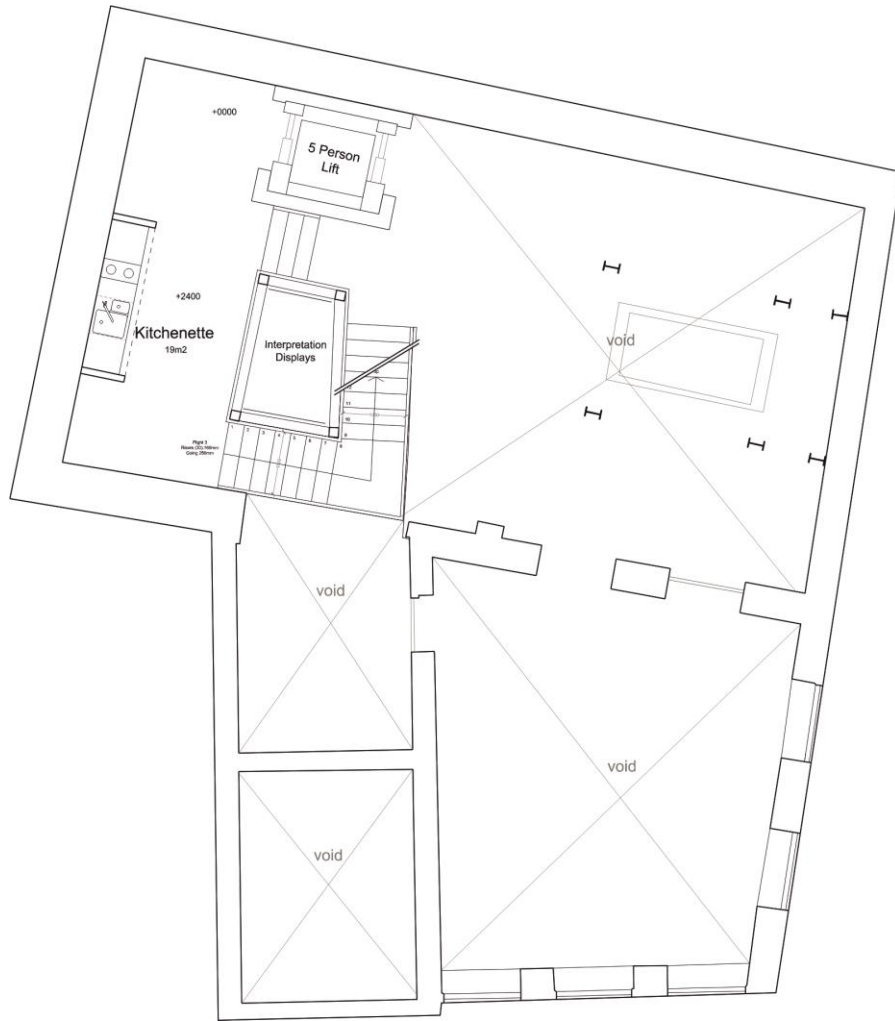
A key design driver was to allow access to these upper storeys, enable the visitors and occupants to experience the sense of volume within the main space and view the original lift gear and winding wheel from different heights whilst maximising the rentable space on the upper floors.

Linking upper floors involved several design options due to the problematic nature of 6 different floor level heights, some half levels and some triple height spaces. The proposed vertical circulation allows access to all areas in an understandable and simple manner, allowing the visitor to orientate themselves whilst also playing on the drama of the space.

Ground Floor

The head stocks will be entered through the existing main gates to the south of the pit head. Once through the main gates ahead will be an entrance lobby and new glazed doors leading into the main access core which is the major intervention to the building. Within this area to the rear will be two new wc's with one being accessible. Past the staircase to the rear of the building is the lift which accesses all levels within the head stocks.



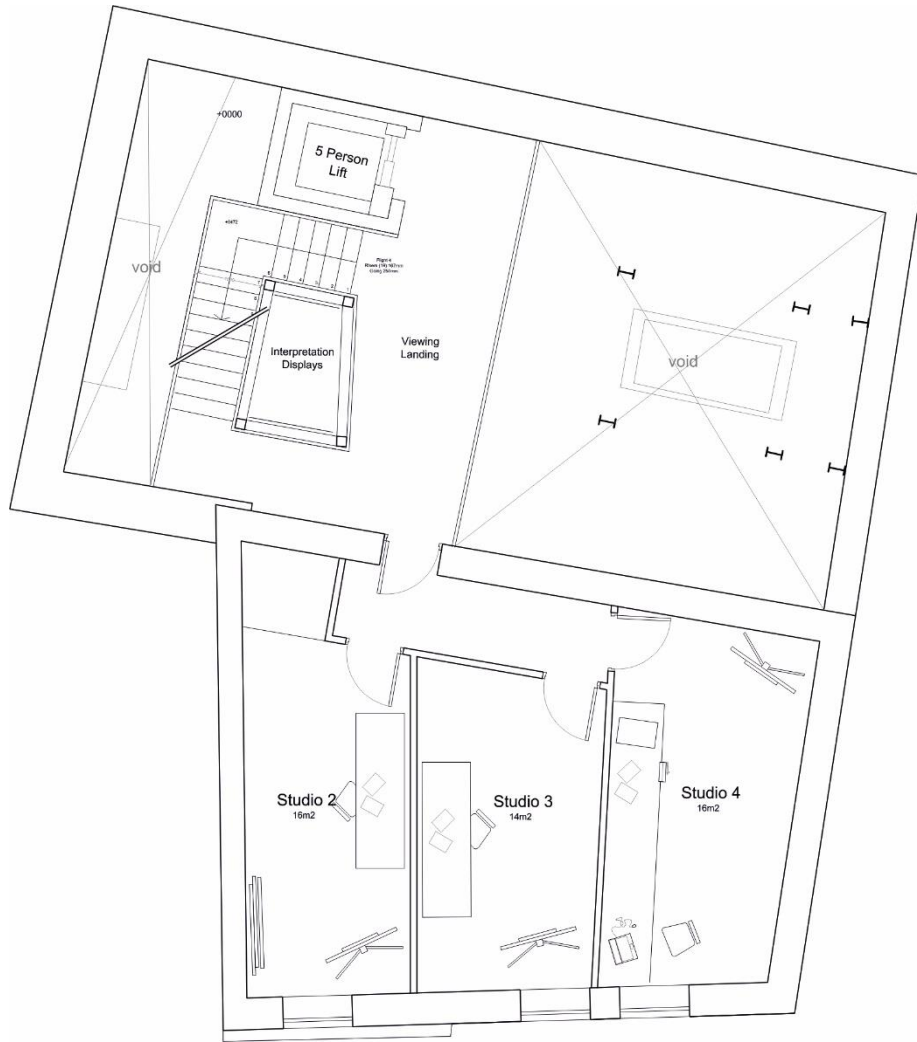


Upper Ground Floor

From the ground floor the staircase within the access core leads up a half storey to the top of the 1.7m thick concrete slab which caps the top of the mine shaft. This level will house the existing lift cage and will have interpretation to accompany it. From this main space can be accessed a further room used either as a studio space or further public space.

Up a further three steps is the kitchenette which will provide basic catering facilities to the occupants, this area leads on into the next run of stairs which continues up to the first floor.



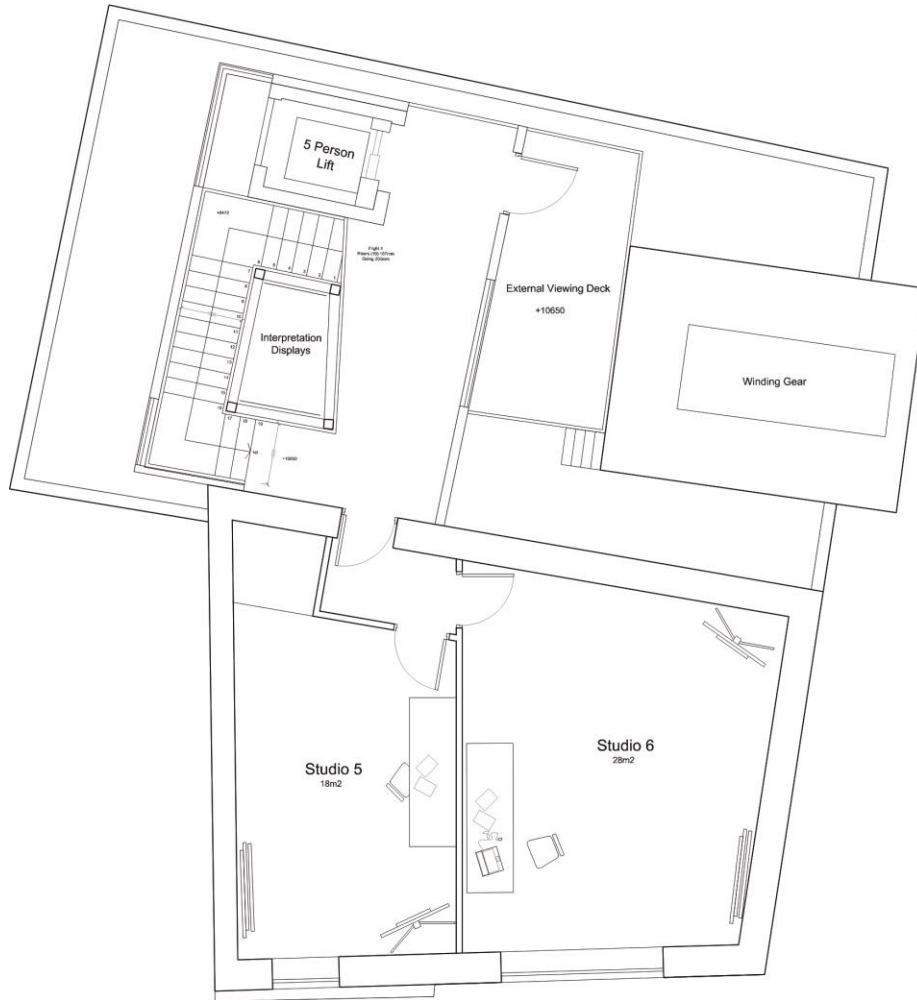


First Floor

The stair leads up from the kitchenette level to the first floor which gives access to three studio spaces located to the front of the building. From the landing on this level visitors can view the volume with the lift cage below.

Interpretation displays will be situated up the centre of the staircase as well as along the barrier to the edge of the landing.





Second Floor

The stairs and lift in the access core continue up to the second floor which contains a further two studios to the front of the building. The new build element to this floor has windows placed to provide key views out from this level and will be part of the interpretation displays throughout the building. The landing area has a full height window giving views to the winding gear. The external viewing deck can be accessed off the landing for a closer up look at the winding gear, this will also give views out over South Shields.



2.4 Scale



Sketch image from the side showing the winding gear

The proposed translucent structure capping the access core is designed to be subordinate to the existing building. This is achieved through the scale and translucency of this intervention compared with the existing. The proposed facades will be stepped away from the edge of the tower, reducing its presence when viewed from ground level. The overall height of this translucent structure will be set well below the existing parapet height.

The proposed starter pods are to be single storey with a footprint of 2.3x5.9m and would be located within the landscape and behind the main façade of the existing building.

Within the building the design has retained the changes in scale of the existing spaces and allows the visitor to experience these at different levels within the spaces through the vertical circulation.

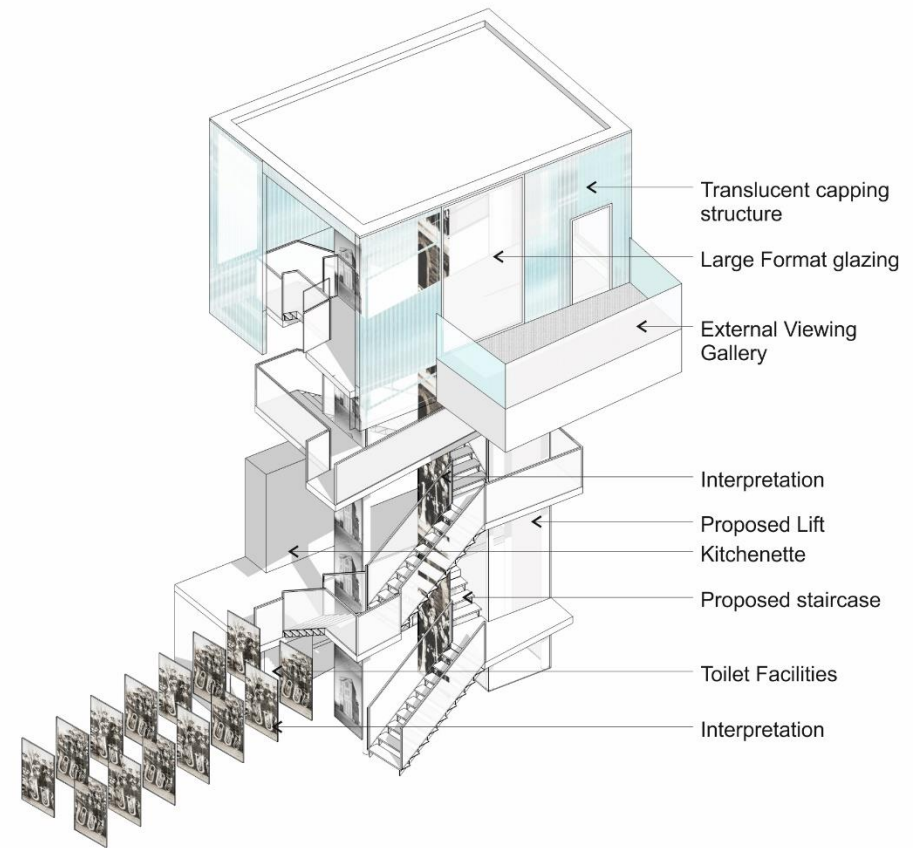
2.5 Appearance

The approach to the proposal is to contrast the new inventions with the existing. The translucent structure will combine large format glazing with a translucent cladding. The translucent and transparent building elements will sit lightly beside the heavy red brick and stone of the existing building. The capping and window frames will be in fine aluminium frames reducing the visual impact of the contemporary extension. Within the building the vertical circulation will be an industrial steel aesthetic with interpretation designed around this space.

External the pods are to continue this industrial lightweight aesthetic and will be constructed from shipping containers.



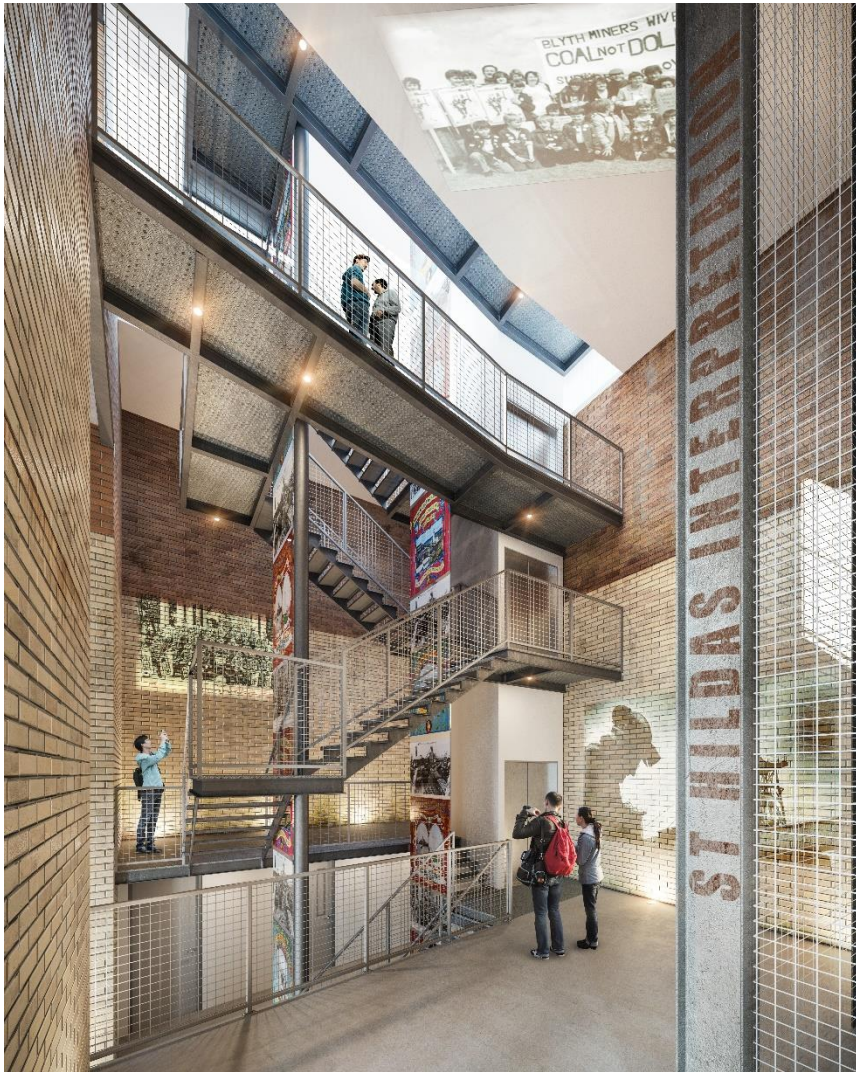
Sketch image of the entrance area



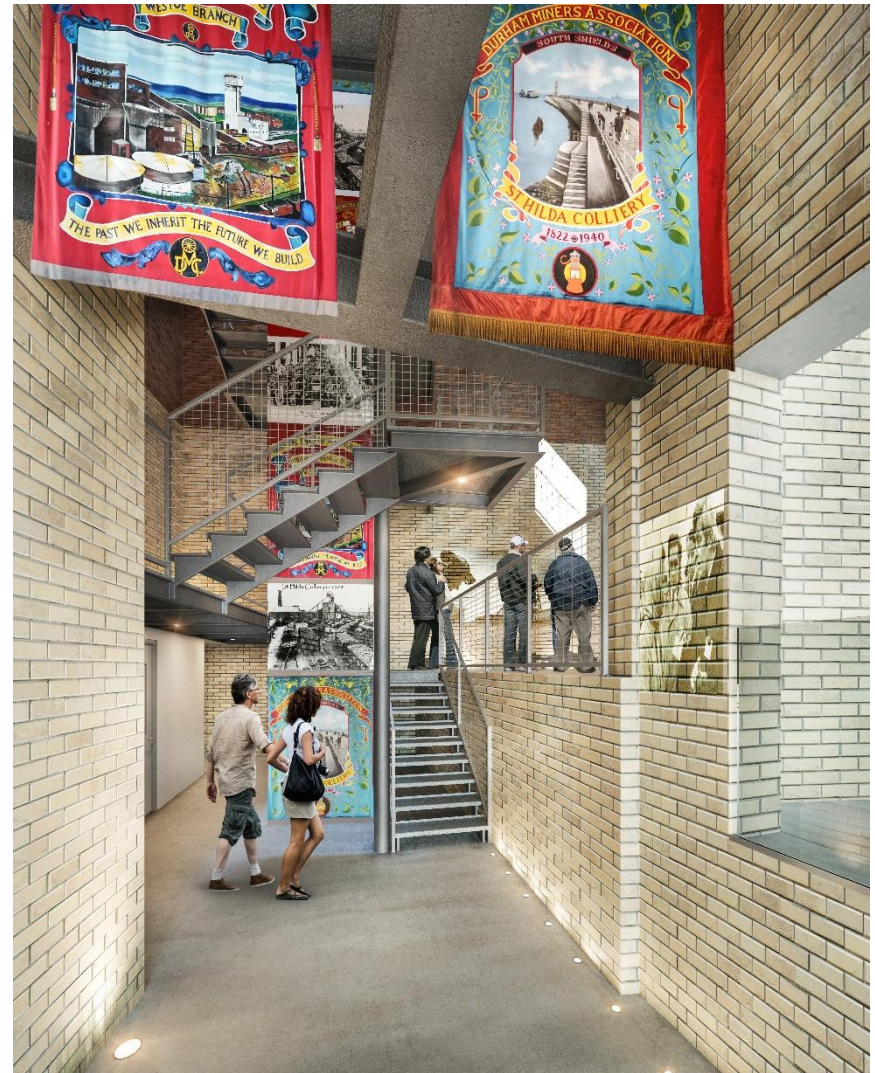
Axonometric of the stair and lift core

Landscaping

Landscaping to the site will be functional, robust and low maintenance. Bonded gravel links the pods to the main building and car park and the surrounding space will remain grassed. The existing fence around the perimeter will be refurbished.



Visualisation of main space with the new staircase



Visualisation of the entrance area looking towards the main space

3.0 Access

Access to the building will be maintained and improved. With the provision of a 6no. car parking space to the rear with access around to the front and cycle parking to the main entrance of the site.

A key feature of the proposal is to enable all visitors to gain access to the building. Interpretation within the building is located across all levels, with a viewing platform on the roof and interpretation throughout the headstock. For this reason a lift has been proposed that will allow access to all these levels. The studios will also be accessible to all with level access from the lift on all levels.