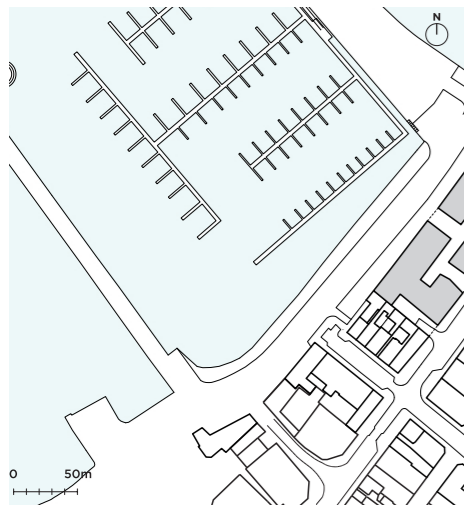


WHITEHAVEN HARBOUR, CUMBRIA



LOCATION: WHITEHAVEN, ENGLAND
COMPLETION: COMPETITION 2011
VALUE: £10.0M
SIZE: 104,00M² (2400M² BASEMENT CARPARK, CYCLES, BIN STORE, 4,300M² OF OFFICE SPACE, 3,700M² OF APARTMENTS) PLUS EXTERNAL AREAS
SERVICE: ARCHITECTURE
SECTORS: RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL
CLIENT: MAGNUS HOMES
STRUCTURES: CURTAINS
SERVICES: CUNDALL
COST CONSULTANT: GARDINER & THEOBALD
SPECIALIST CONSULTANTS: CUNDALL: SUSTAINABILITY
AWARDS: 2011: RIBA COMPETITION, PLACED 2ND

The Whitehaven Harbour development is a pivotal project in the implementation of 'Britain's Energy Coast', providing improved business accommodation and high quality housing, on a prominent site along Cumbria's Coastline. The development offers an opportunity to continue the regeneration of this former working port which has been transformed into a thriving leisure marina over the past decade. Austin-Smith:Lord was awarded second place in this RIBA Open International Design Competition which attracted 139 entries.



Section A-A



Typical floor plan

Key to plans:
 1. 2 Bed Apartment
 2. 2 Bed Apartment
 3. 3 Bed Apartment
 4. Office Space



Respecting the grain of the existing townscape, the massing is predominantly 3.5 storeys where the building abuts Georgian heritage to the south-west, rising to 5.5 storeys in the north to mediate with larger more recent developments. Whitehaven's grid-iron planning layout is reflected through the vertical expression of apartments, while its roofscape references both the prevalent undulating terrace roofs and former heroic maritime structures. These have been designed to be clearly visible from both up-close and the surrounding landscape.

An inner courtyard is accessed by a central passageway facing the harbour, linking to two further passageways through the rear block to connect to the street behind. The projected increase in footfall is intended to unlock back street frontages currently boarded up. An old Bath House on the site is retained and restored to provide a dramatic entrance to office accommodation and a first floor harbour viewing terrace. Intervening void space and the use of perforated metal for the over-sailing bridges enables daylight penetration to be maintained to the courtyard.

The project's tight budget and relatively isolated location meant that any solution needed to adopt a rational construction method. The project brief is sensibly distributed within two narrow blocks, both underpinned by a 7.5 metre structural grid. This strategy maximises the number of apartments per floor and grants all a direct harbour frontage. The grid allows for a flexible office layout and also provides efficient basement planning to maximise the number of car spaces and cycle storage. High sustainability aspirations were also sought and this configuration allows for effective cross-ventilation and minimal dependency on artificial lighting.

Timeless, locally sourced materials were proposed; richly textured painted brickwork walls, stained timber cladding to the upper parts and roof, slate tiled balconies, cobble paved public spaces with galvanised steel bridges.

