## Ref. 4/25/2129/0F1

5 & 6 Church Lane, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RQ. Response to Consultation Comments – Letter dated 27/05/2025.

## Context & Heritage Balance

The existing buildings have suffered from long-term neglect, modern interventions, and vacancy, making a comprehensive refurbishment both necessary and beneficial. The proposed works represent a significant step-change that would markedly improve their contribution to the streetscape.

Our proposal delivers heritage-led regeneration, aligning with Local Plan Policies ENV4 and DM27, by:

- Reinstating traditional render,
- Reordering blocked and altered apertures,
- Installing vertically proportioned sash-style windows,
- Removing incongruous tiling and modern cladding.

# **Balanced Approach to Appearance and Viability**

#### Windows

We acknowledge the Conservation Area Design Guide recommends timber sash windows. However, uPVC sliding sash units proposed here closely replicate traditional timber forms in proportion, sightline, and operation.

The proposed use of high-performance uPVC sliding sash windows provides a pragmatic compromise closely replicating traditional vertical proportions while delivering significant energy and acoustic benefits.

Historic England recognises that "adapting historic buildings appropriately" can support the twin aims of conservation and carbon reduction. They further note that replacing nonoriginal or unsympathetic windows with efficient alternatives when detailed appropriately may "have a neutral impact or enhance significance." Importantly, nearly all adjacent and nearby properties (including No. 5, part of application and the former public house opposite) already contain uPVC windows. In one recent case, permission was granted for uPVC replacements in a conservation setting on Part L energy compliance grounds (Application Reference: 4/23/2017/0F1 & 4/24/2135/0F1).



UPVC windows to former public house



UPVC windows to rear of public house/ Church Lane.

Retaining uPVC sash windows helps strike a pragmatic balance between visual enhancement, energy performance, and long-term sustainability. These windows are low-maintenance and contribute to the affordability and longevity of the HMO, key to keeping the building in viable use.

Furthermore, as a 7-bed HMO, internal and external acoustic performance is a material consideration. Modern uPVC sash windows outperform traditional single glazing in reducing external noise, an important factor for tenant wellbeing along this busy junction. Enhancing acoustic separation aligns with the objectives of Policy SS2 of the Copeland Local Plan, contributing to a healthier and more inclusive living environment.

Please see amended elevation drawing 2425-002-07C enclosed with further clarification on the frame/ fenestration detail as requested.

# **Roof Covering** -

While the use of natural slate is encouraged, our choice of concrete tiles reflects the dominant local precedent, including No. 5 and several nearby properties.

Concrete tiles will be laid in a traditional format, maintaining rooflines and proportions compatible with the street scene. The use of sympathetic profiles ensures that the overall effect is in keeping with the conservation character while supporting economic viability.

Installed cost per square metre comparison:

- Westmoreland Slate = approx. £150-200 m<sup>2</sup>
- Concrete Roof Tiles = approx. £40-60 m<sup>2</sup>

Various examples throughout the Conservation area which have been deemed acceptable/ not undertaken any enforcement action can be found, see precedents below.





Adjacent properties with concrete roof tiles/ mixed with slate.

## **Demonstrable Improvement**

The submitted visual materials and drawings clearly show how the existing unsympathetic elements will be removed and the building's traditional character enhanced. The scheme re-establishes coherent elevation hierarchy and enhances architectural rhythm at this prominent corner.

This aligns with the aims of the Conservation Area Design Guide, to promote design that enhances, not just replicates the past, and with the Copeland Local Plan's objectives to enable the sustainable reuse of vacant heritage assets.



Before - Photograph

After – indicative illustration

#### **Deliverability and Long-Term Stewardship**

Historic England's guidance advocates for a "whole-building approach," prioritising effective and proportionate interventions that support long-term use, viability, and energy efficiency.

In this case, restoring the façade, reusing the existing structure, and delivering a fully compliant internal layout (including insulation, new services, and ventilation) deliver substantial environmental and heritage benefits without undue burden on the applicant or loss of viability.

The property has been vacant and degraded for some time. The risk of continued vacancy and deterioration would present a far greater threat to the Conservation Area than the minimal and reversible material choices currently proposed.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, the scheme offers a balanced and sensitive approach to conservation and climate-conscious redevelopment. It aligns with the Copeland Local Plan, Historic England's energy retrofit guidance, and the NPPF's objectives to reduce emissions, reuse buildings, and preserve heritage assets in viable ways.

We hope this additional clarification supports a positive recommendation for approval.