

Design + Access/ Heritage Statement

2425-002 Church Lane

(Revision A)

March 2025



Design & Access/ Heritage Statement

Site Address: 5 & 6 Church Lane, Hensingham, Whitehaven, CA28 8RQ
Applicant: GR Property Developers Ltd
Date: 31/03/2025
Author: Mike Crewdson (BA Hons, PG Dip, ARB, RIBA)



1. Introduction

This Design & Access Statement supports a full planning application for the conversion of 5 & 6 Church Lane, Hensingham, Whitehaven into a large House in Multiple Occupation (Sui Generis) accommodating 7 residents. The proposal includes:

- Change of use from one dwelling house (no.5) / one vacant commercial unit (formerly betting shop) to one large HMO
- Demolition of existing outbuildings
- Construction of a new single-storey ancillary outbuilding for plant
- External enhancements to restore the architectural character of the main building.

The site lies within the Hensingham Conservation Area and the proposal has been sensitively designed to reinstate lost architectural detail, improve townscape value, and deliver much-needed shared accommodation in a sustainable location.



2. Planning Policy Context

The proposal aligns with the following:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – including principles of delivering a sufficient
-
- supply of homes, conserving heritage assets, and making effective use of land.
- Copeland Local Plan 2013–2028, including:

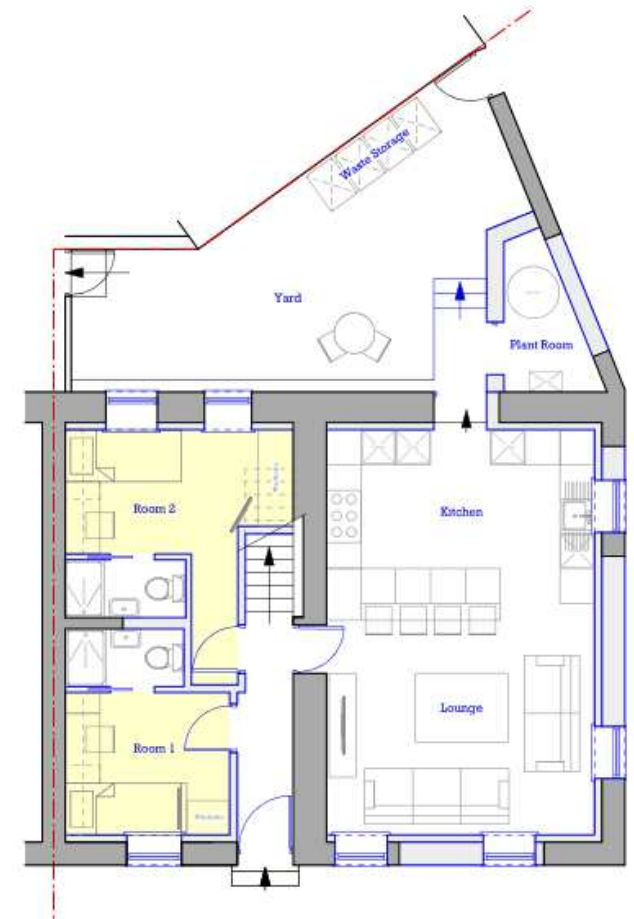
- Policy SS2 (Sustainable Development Principles)
- Policy H4 (Providing Affordable Housing)
- Policy ENV4 (Heritage Assets)
- Policy DM27 (Built Heritage and Archaeology)
- Hensingham Conservation Area Appraisal (April 2021)
- Copeland Conservation Design Guide.

The proposal promotes sustainable reuse of buildings and contributes positively to the established townscape, meeting the dual objectives of conservation and housing delivery.

3. Site and Context

The application site comprises two conjoined properties—formerly residential and commercial—located on a prominent corner at the junction of Church Lane and the B5295. The buildings are two-storey and constructed in render over masonry with pitched slate roofs. Historically, No. 6 housed a ground-floor retail unit (most recently a betting shop), while No. 5 was in residential use.

The buildings sit within a mixed urban fabric of traditional terraced properties, village amenities, and civic spaces, all contributing to the distinctive historic grain of Hensingham. The wider Conservation Area is characterised by varied rooflines, rendered façades, sash-style windows, and sandstone boundary walls. The site includes a rear yard with poor-quality ancillary structures proposed for removal.



4. Amount and Use

- **Existing Use:** C3 Residential / Former commercial
- **Proposed Use:** Sui Generis (Large HMO – 7 unrelated residents)
- **Accommodation:**
 - 7 en-suite bedrooms
 - Shared kitchen/dining/living area.
 - Dedicated outbuilding accommodating a plant room.
 - Enclosed private amenity yard with refuse storage.

The internal configuration meets or exceeds national and local standards for HMO licensing, with generous communal provision and private sanitary facilities for all occupants.

5. Layout and Internal Design

The design approach retains the existing building envelope and reorders the internal layout to provide:

- A logical circulation spine linking ground-floor communal and private spaces.
- Fully compliant room sizes (6.51–9.8 sqm) with natural light and outlook
- A combined kitchen/lounge with integrated seating, high-capacity appliances, and generous storage



- Fire strategy with protected escape routes, FD30-rated doors, and interlinked detection.
- Retention of key loadbearing masonry walls and restoration of original structural openings

The spatial hierarchy has been developed in accordance with best practice for co-living and communal accommodation.

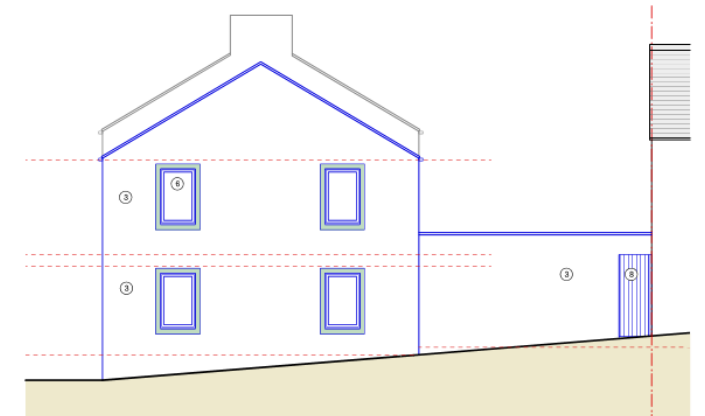


6. Scale and External Appearance

Architectural proposals focus on restoring the front and side elevations through:

- Removal of unsympathetic green tiling and blocked apertures
- Installation of timber-look sash windows with vertical proportions
- Traditional painted render finish in colours consistent with local vernacular
- Repair or reinstatement of stone window cills and lintels where required.

These enhancements are informed by the Proposed Elevations (Drawing 2425-002-07B), which demonstrate a sensitive and conservation-led design response.



7. Demolition and Outbuildings

Demolition:

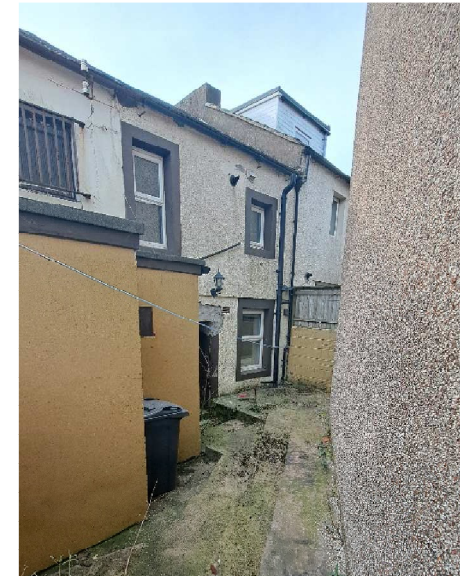
-

- Rear ancillary structures are to be demolished due to their poor condition, visual intrusion, and lack of heritage significance.

New Outbuilding:

- A single-storey, flat-roofed structure is proposed to the rear yard, accommodating:
 - Plant room for heating and utilities.
- External finish to match the restored main building with appropriate eaves detail and fenestration.

This structure enhances the visual quality and functionality of the rear yard without disrupting the character of the Conservation Area.

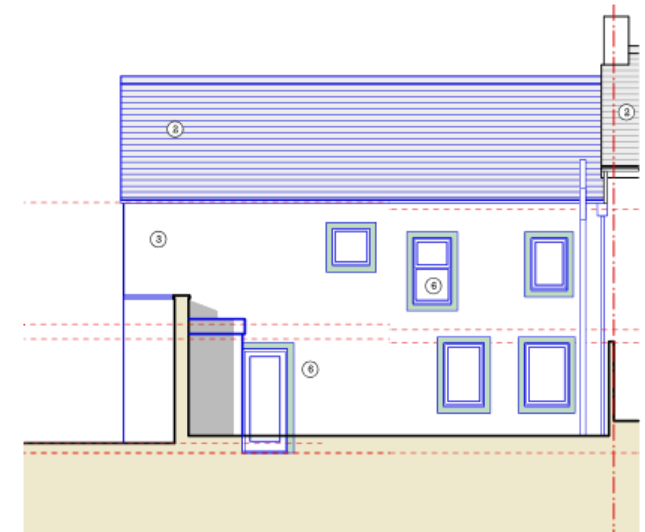


8. Landscaping and Amenity

- The rear yard is resurfaced to provide private amenity space, and service access.
- New hardstanding and paving will be sympathetic to local materials and colour palette.
- Integrated refuse strategy ensures bins are concealed from public view.

9. Access and Parking

- Pedestrian and emergency access maintained from Church Lane and the side yard.
- No on-site parking is proposed; the scheme is intended as car-free/ low car usage.



- Secure cycle storage could be provided in accordance with local parking standards.
- The site is in a sustainable, walkable location close to local shops, bus routes, and employment opportunities.
- Emergency and refuse vehicle access is unaffected.

10. Sustainability

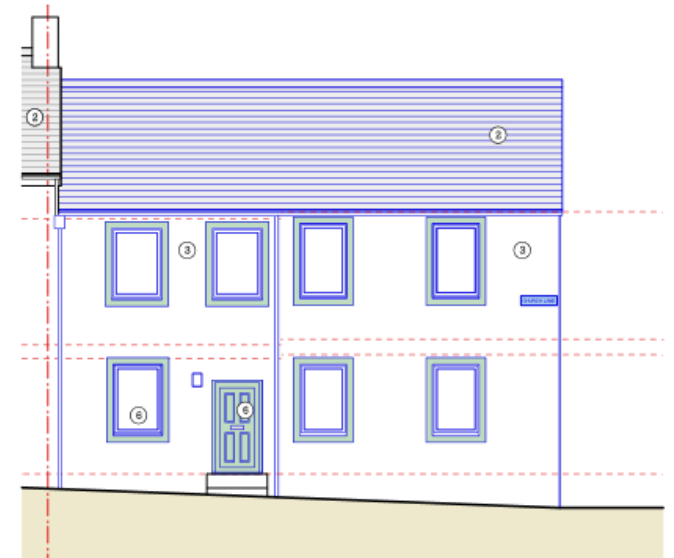
The design embraces the principles of energy efficiency and sustainable living:

- Reuse of existing structure to reduce embodied carbon
- Thermal upgrades to windows, walls, floors and roof
- Low-energy lighting, water-efficient fittings, and modern heating
- Promotion of sustainable transport through secure cycle storage

The development meets Part L of the Building Regulations and aims to reduce operational carbon while supporting affordable living.

11. Heritage and Conservation

The buildings at 5 & 6 Church Lane form part of a historically significant group within the Hensingham Conservation Area. Their architectural language has been eroded through unsympathetic alterations, poor maintenance, and vacancy.



The proposal delivers a fabric-first approach to conservation, with a scope of work that includes:

- Strip-out of modern cladding and reinstatement of traditional render.
- Roof covering replacement using sympathetic concrete tile (matching neighbouring listed properties).
- Reopening of original window and door apertures

These enhancements directly respond to the Conservation Area Appraisal, which stresses the value of traditional materials, fenestration patterns, and façade articulation. The scheme enhances the building's contribution to the townscape and sustains the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

The proposals comply with Policy ENV4 and DM27 of the Copeland Local Plan and meet the statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area under Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

12. Community Safety and Management

The property will be:

- Professionally managed by a licensed landlord or agent
- Subject to Copeland Borough Council's HMO licence conditions
- Operated with a tenant code of conduct and house rules.
- Designed with secure boundaries, controlled access, and passive surveillance.

13. Conclusion

This application presents a conservation-led redevelopment of 5 & 6 Church Lane into a 7-bedroom HMO that:

- Delivers high-quality, affordable shared accommodation.
- Restores and enhances a prominent but currently dilapidated corner site.
- Improves architectural cohesion in the Conservation Area
- Supports sustainable travel and energy efficiency.

We respectfully invite Copeland (Cumberland) Council to support this application.