

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Insertion of a new window

Address: 10 Abbey Farm, Abbey Road, St Bees

Reference: 4/24/2100/OL1

Date: 11/04/23

Description: 10 Abbey Farm is the end house within a converted barn range adjoining Abbey Farm house itself. The barn range was listed in 1979 and converted to dwellings in about 2000. It appears to be late 18th century with later additions and alterations. The neighbouring farmhouse is dated 1679.

Conclusion: Request further information and design revision

Assessment:

- I note that this listed barn has been fitted with uPVC windows. Though there is not such a strong typological precedent for a certain type of window here as there might be with another building type – the frontage of a Georgian town house for example – this is against the guidance of our Conservation Area Design Guide, has had a small negative impact on the appearance of the building, and would be resisted were it proposed.
- However, I also note that the windows have a similar appearance to the brown stained wooden windows that were consented when the building was converted into houses c. 2000.
- I am not aware of listed building consent having been granted for the replacement of those timber windows with these uPVC ones, and unless one can be produced I therefore request that new windows be in timber.
- I note that the new window is similar in proportions to a couple of the windows on the roadside elevation of the barn range
- I request that the new opening be formed using sandstone surrounds and sill, similar to the other two windows already in the gable elevation.
- For durability, a sustainably sourced hardwood such as sapele or iroko, or an engineered timber such as Accoya, or Douglas Fir, would all be options I'd recommend considering. Softwood other than Douglas Fir are unlikely to last.
- I request the sketch be updated to show that the proposed window will feature a stone banding and sill to match the existing, and that the supporting info be updated to refer to the proposed material (stating timber would be sufficient; I'd be happy for the species to be at the applicant's discretion). I also request that the sketch show the dimensions of the existing ground floor window in that elevation to allow comparison with the new window's dimensions to be made.
- When the existing plastic windows are replaced at a future date, the replacements should be of timber construction. The Council should be approached at that time for advice.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a need “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works [for the Local Planning Authority to] have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest” [Section 16(2)].

Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area.”

NPPF para. 197 states that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation...”

NPPF para. 199 states, in the case of designated heritage assets, “great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”, irrespective of whether potential harm is substantial, less-than-substantial, or total loss. Where harm to a designated heritage asset is less-than-substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 202).

Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when making decisions.

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 207 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 201) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 202).

The former Copeland Borough Council’s Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- Local Plan Policy ST1C(ii) highlights the importance of protecting, enhancing and restoring the Borough’s cultural and heritage features and their settings.
- ST1D emphasizes the council’s commitment to creating and retaining quality places.
- ENV4A stresses the importance of protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value.
- DM27A outlines support in principle for developments that “protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the borough’s historic sites and their settings”.
- DM27C outlines the restriction in principle of development within conservation areas to that which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.
- DM27D highlights the necessity of avoiding disrespectful alterations, substantial demolition, adverse effects on setting or views, or changes of use that harm the conservation or economic viability of a listed building.

The Conservation Area Design Guide is a supplementary planning document adopted in 2017 that is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within conservation areas in the legacy Copeland area. It is therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford, Conservation and Design Officer