

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Alterations & improvements to rear of building including: 1) replacement of flat roof with new pitched roof 2) renewal/alteration/renovation of windows 3) installation of solar panels to rear wing roof 4) alterations to entrance doors from carpark level 5) internal reconfiguration to rear wing including insulating and general upgrading of timber framed structure

Address: Grindal House, Main Street, St Bees

Reference: 4/23/2267/OL1 and 4/22/2268/OF1

Date: 24/10/23

Description: Grindal House is a substantial grade II listed building, built as the Station Hotel to serve growing rail traffic from the mid-19th century, and subsequently owned by St Bees School during the 20th century, who extended it to the rear. It is located in St Bees Conservation Area and received permission and consent in 2022 for conversion to an apart hotel.

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- The rear wing currently makes a negative contribution to both the character and appearance of the conservation area (though its impact is lessened by the small degree of visibility) and the listed building itself (though again lessened by being tucked round to the rear), and settings of nearby heritage assets.
- The renovation and improvement of this wing provides the opportunity to enhance the whole area in a low impact way.
- The internal alterations proposed will have no direct impact on the significance of Grindal House, but will improve the ability of visitors to appreciate it.
- The external alterations will have a beneficial effect on the significance of the building, the conservation area, and the settings of nearby heritage assets.
- I would view the pitching of the roof and inclusion of PV panels to be a good way of incorporating onsite generation with low impact.
 - Is the plant for the solar panel systems to be located within the extension or the main part of the building?
- I have no objection to the proposed material palette, including the aluminium windows, as they are appropriate for a modern extension and the extension itself is not prominent from most vantage points. The photo sample of the slate should be sufficient.
- The proposals should bring the wing more into its own as an extension with a distinct but complementary character to the main part of the building.

Summary:

- Where is the plant for the solar panels to be located?
- The solar panels are in a discreet location and are shown flush-mounted on the drawings. This could be confirmed, or ensured through use of a condition.

- Clarification should be provided on the details of the proposed entrance doors.

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)]. This requirement also applies to the granting of planning permission affecting a listing building or its setting [Section 66(1)].

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.”

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

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.

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 206)

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.
- ENV4B outlines support for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring assets are put to appropriate, viable and sustainable uses.
- ENV4C aims to strengthen the distinctive character of settlements through high quality urban design and architecture that respect character and setting.
- DM10 emphasises the need for high quality design and quality places. Part B requires design to respond to local character at multiple scales, paying attention to plot size and arrangement, massing and scale, interstitial spaces, and materials. Part C requires the incorporation of existing features such as landscape and vernacular style.

- DM13D outlines the need, in converting non-residential buildings within settlement limits, or in subdividing large residential buildings within settlement limits, for conversion works to conserve the character of the building.
- 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