

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Change of use from a guest house (use class c1) to single use holiday let (use class c1) including internal and external alterations to the property

Address: 18 Irish Street, Whitehaven

Reference: 4/23/2062/0F1 & 4/23/2063/0L1

Date: 17/04/23

Description: A fine double-fronted house dating from the 1730-6, with original features and layout still present. The site was originally purchased by Thomas Ritson, glazier, on 10th June 1730, and the house built shortly thereafter.

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- During the mid-18th century, 18 Irish Street was one of the properties that had let out its cellar as a separate tenanted property. By 1762, 8% of all households were in converted cellars. Access appears to have been via the side passage and projecting stair turret to rear, prior to the later rear extensions.
- Internally, a highly significant panelled cupboard survives from the mid-18th century.
- The stone newel stair is a wonderful survivor likely from the 1730s.
- There is also a bolection moulded fireplace of similar date.
- The rear outrigger appears originally to have been a detached kitchen accessed via a little yard from the ginnel and from the rear door that passes the bottom of the newel stair. This has subsequently been joined to the house and extended upwards. This is either original or shortly thereafter, but was certainly in existence by 1779.
- The ginnel is part of the original plan.

I have several questions at this stage about detail relating to the alterations, although am supportive of the principle.

- What work is needed to get the 1730s fireplace operational?
- What happened to the stone newel stairs? When were the timber treads fitted and are they over the top of the stone treads? LBC would have been needed for the stone tread removal and probably refused.
- The new wall opening in the dining room does appear to be through an original wall, so this needs further investigation.

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).

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 emphasises 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 Copeland’s 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. It is therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford

Conservation and Design Officer