



# **Design & Access Statement**

**Conversion of Former Public House into  
9no. Flats**

**5-6 High Street & 10 North Street,  
Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5AH**

**Prepared on behalf of Cleator Moor Developments Ltd**

**Document:**

Planning & Heritage Statement

**Site:**

5-6 High Street & 10 North Street, Cleator Moor, Cumbria  
CA25 5AH

**Project:**

Conversion of Former Public House into 9no. Flats

**Client:**

Cleator Moor Developments Ltd.

**Statement prepared by:**

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# 1. Introduction

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- 1.1 Prism Planning has been engaged by Cleator Moor Developments Ltd. to provide planning advice, support and guidance in the preparation and submission of the application for planning permission regarding the proposed conversion of the former public house at 5-6 High Street & 10 North Street, Cleator Moor to provide 9no. flats.
- 1.2 The subject planning application was submitted via the Planning Portal on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, following which we received confirmation from the Planning Portal on 20<sup>th</sup> December that they had forwarded the application to Cumberland Council. On 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 we received an email from the Council asking that we agree to a slight revision to the application description ("Conversion of Former Public House into 9no. Flats" rather than "Conversion of Former Public House to Provide Flatted Residential Accommodation", as had shown on the application form and the submitted Planning & Heritage Statement) and advising that a Design & Access Statement would be required. Rod Hepplewhite of Prism planning agreed to the proposed revision to the application description by email on 4<sup>th</sup> January and advised that the Design & Access Statement would follow as soon as possible. The planning application submission included a comprehensive Planning & Heritage Statement and it had been hoped that this would suffice given the small scale nature of the proposed development and the fact that the building is not listed. Nonetheless, we accept that the site's location with the Cleator Moor Conservation area triggers a requirement for a Design & Access Statement.
- 1.3 In accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and advice provided in Planning Practice and Guidance, the purpose of this Design & Access Statement is to consider the design and access aspects of the proposals with reference to describing the context of the development, setting out design principles and concepts employed, a consideration of local access policy, advising as to pre-application consultation and an indication as to how access issues have been addressed.
- 1.4 This Design & Access Statement should be read with reference to the submitted Planning & Heritage Statement, which reviews both local and national planning policies relevant to the proposed development as well as relevant built heritage considerations.

## 2. The Site and its Context

- 2.1 The application site comprises the former public house known as 'The Commercial', which stands on the northern side of High Street and immediately east of North Street, as shown on the Google Earth image below. The unlisted building is prominently situated within Cleator Moor town centre and lies within the Cleator Moor Conservation Area. Having stood vacant for many years, the appearance of the building is slowly but steadily deteriorating.



Figure 1: The application site and surrounding area Source: Google Earth (image date 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018)

- 2.2 On the opposite (western side) corner of North Street to the application site is situated a 'BetFred' betting office with a pair of semi-detached bungalows to the north (rear) of it. To the immediate east of the application site lies 'Popeye's' hot food takeaway at no.7 High Street. The High Street comprises a number of small shop units including a good number of hot food takeaways. To the rear(north) of the application site lies the Wyndham Manor residential & dementia care home on Cross North Street. On the opposite side of High Street to the application site are two listed buildings (Council offices and Library) and a listed structure (Memorial Fountain), all listed at Grade II and grouped around the Market Place.
- 2.3 The application site comprises two distinct elements. The first is 5-6 High Street, which fronts onto High Street but also wraps around into North Street, and is three storeys in height. This element is the original 'Commercial Inn'. Behind this element and to the immediate north is the conjoined 10 North Street, which fronts onto North Street and is two storeys in height. It comprises a former terraced house, later converted into another public house known as 'The Albert' before becoming subsumed into 'The Commercial' many years ago.

2.4 Prior to closure of the public house the property comprised the following accommodation:

Ground Floor:

Open plan public house with two serveries, main bar, lounge, games area and toilets plus two bedroomed self-contained flat

First Floor:

Two reception rooms, six bedrooms, two kitchens, two bathrooms, toilets and two store rooms.

Second Floor:

Four double bedrooms and three single bedrooms.

The property was and is without off-street parking or servicing facilities but there is on-street parking available on North Street. There is also a public car park off Jacktrees Road on the opposite side of High Street to the application site.

2.5 Photographs of the site and surrounding area, taken on the morning of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023, are provided at Appendix A of the Planning & Heritage Statement.

### 3. The Proposals

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- 3.1 This section of the Statement describes the proposed development with reference to the proposed use of the building, the amount and scale of development, the proposed layout of the building, the appearance of the building and access arrangements.
- 3.2 Planning permission is sought for the conversion of the former public house, 'The Commercial' at 5-6 High Street & 10 North Street, Cleator Moor to provide flatted residential accommodation.
- 3.3 In total, 9no. of self-contained flats are proposed, 6no. 1-bed, 2no. 2-bed and 1no. 3-bed flats are proposed.
- 3.4 The overall scale of the building will not alter to any great degree although a small ground and first floor extension is proposed within the internal yard area to replace an existing ground floor extension in order to provide a bedroom for both Flats 1 and 5; and a small second floor extension is proposed towards the northern end of the building to provide access to the second floor flat. As proposed, the building will have a total floor area of 587m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.5 As shown on the submitted plans, the following accommodation is proposed:  
Ground Floor (232.5m<sup>2</sup>): 3no. 1-bed and 1no. 2-bed flats;  
First Floor (232.5m<sup>2</sup>): 3no. 1-bed and 1no. 2-bed flats; and  
Second Floor (122m<sup>2</sup>): 1no. 3-bed flat.
- 3.6 Each of the flats on the ground and first floors comprises a lounge/kitchen/dining room, a bathroom and either one or two bedrooms. The flat on the second floor comprises a lounge/kitchen/dining room, a bathroom and three bedrooms with master en-suite.
- 3.7 The form and appearance of the building will not alter to any great degree. The external alterations proposed, in the form of new and altered openings, have been kept to a minimum and designed to be sympathetic to existing window and door openings. In this regard, the front (south elevation) will remain unaltered; an existing door on the North Street (west) elevation will be converted to a window and two doors blocked up; and on the yard (east) elevation three windows will be re-sized, three will be blocked up and two new windows formed, an existing double door will be replaced by double patio windows. The building is to be re-roofed in natural black slate (like for like) and the entire building, including the proposed extensions, will be re-rendered with Antique White K-rend render.
- 3.8 Access to the flats will be via a communal entrance off North Street. Historically the property has been without off-street parking or servicing. One car (or two cars end-to-end) could be parked at the rear of the building off North Street. Motorbikes could be parked within the yard area and secured cycle storage could be provided within the yard area too, if so required.

## 4. Design & Access Considerations

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### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 In accordance with advice provided in Planning Practice and Guidance, this section of the Statement considers design and access aspects of the proposals in terms of design principles and concepts employed, setting out the context of the development, a consideration of local access policy, advice as to pre-application consultation and an indication as to how access issues have been addressed.

### 4.2 Design Principles and Concepts

- 4.2.1 The applicant noted the site's location within the Cleator Moor Conservation Area and its relative close proximity to a number of listed buildings (as discussed in the Planning & Heritage Statement) and acknowledged that, although the building is not listed, it could be considered to be a non-designated heritage asset. With this in mind, the applicant sought to respect the heritage of the building and keep external alterations to an absolute minimum. In this regard, the applicant sought to concentrate efforts as far as possible on the external appearance to the building to cosmetic improvements (re-rendering for example) and to sympathetically replacing the existing natural black slate roof covering, which is showing significant signs of aging on a like for like basis.
- 4.2.2 Internally, it is clear that the building has been subject to a number of alterations over the years and in this regard the concept was to optimise the use of the floorspace, making an effective use of the building whilst taking note of the response to the pre-application enquiry submitted in July 2023 regarding ensuring that the flats are suitably sized and that a mix of flats is proposed in terms of number of bedrooms provided. Moreover, while the exterior of the building will be seen by anyone passing, the interior of the building will not be seen apart from anyone living there or visiting.

### 4.3 Context of the Development

- 4.3.1 The building is prominently situated within Cleator Moor town centre and lies within the Cleator Moor Conservation Area and in relative close proximity to six listed building/structures (5 buildings and 1 structure, a memorial fountain). A detailed discussion of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings/structures is provided at chapter 5 of the Planning & Heritage Statement.
- 4.3.2 As would be expected, commercial uses predominate within the town centre although many properties have residential flats above and there are examples of properties being used solely for residential purposes. Furthermore, it would appear that the listed former National Westminster Bank building at 59 High Street has been converted to residential accommodation of some form. Beyond, residential uses predominate and in this regard there is a care home, Wyndham Manor residential & dementia care home, to the immediate north (rear) of the building and a link terrace of 3no. bungalows diagonally opposite the site to the north west, all located off Cross Street.



- 4.3.3 The building stands vacant and has been for a considerable time since the public house closed its doors. Despite being marketed widely, no pub operator has shown firm interest in re-opening the public house and no-one has come forward with an alternative commercial use of the building. It is clear that some other alternative use of the building is required if it is to be brought back into beneficial use. The applicant considers that providing residential flatted accommodation represents the optimum alternative use of the building.
- 4.3.4 Over the years the building has been altered significantly internally although the exterior of the building appears to retain its original appearance, more or less. However, the building is in a sad state of repair, both internally and externally. Having stood vacant for many years, the public appearance of the building is slowly but steadily deteriorating such that it has an adverse impact on the character and appearance of Cleator Moor Conservation Area.
- 4.3.5 It is considered that the proposed refurbishment of and alterations to the building respect the character and appearance of the non-designated heritage asset together with the character and appearance of the Cleator Moor Conservation Area.

#### **4.4 Local Access Policy**

- 4.4.1 The building lies in a sustainable location within Cleator Moor town centre, with access to public transport via the bus stops nearby on either side of High Street. Moreover, on-street parking is available on North Street and there is a public car park off Jacktrees Road on the opposite side of High Street to the application site. Servicing, including bin collections, will take place from the side of the building (off North street) as happens at present.
- 4.4.2 Historically the property has been without off-street parking or servicing. One car (or two cars end-to-end) could be parked at the rear of the building off North Street. Motorbikes could be parked within the yard area and secured cycle storage could be provided within the yard area too, if so required. These arrangements are considered acceptable for the proposed development. Furthermore, as paragraph 115 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) advises, *“development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual impacts on the road network would be severe”*.
- 4.4.3 With regards to the local planning policy, the access arrangements accord with Policy DM13, ‘Conversion of Buildings Within Settlement Limits’, of the adopted Copeland Local Plan and Policy H13PU, ‘Conversion and sub-division of buildings to residential uses including large HMOs’ of the emerging Copeland Local Plan.

#### **4.5 Pre-application Consultation**

- 4.5.1 The applicant submitted a pre-application enquiry to the Council on 21st July 2023, to which a generally positive response was received on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023 (CC ref: PAA/23/0055). The application plans have been prepared with full cognisance afforded to the comments in the pre-application response and have been revised accordingly from those submitted at the pre-application stage following further discussions between the applicant and Sean McLean of Sean McLean Design with input from Rod Hepplewhite of Prism Planning. Indeed, the proposals have

been scaled back quite significantly in terms of extensions proposed to the building and the number of flats has been reduced from 12 to 9 and a 3-bed flat introduced into the mix.

## **4.6 Addressing Access Issues**

- 4.6.1 No access issues of any significance were identified during the preparation of the application. As advised above, one car (or two cars end-to-end) could be parked at the rear of the building off North Street. Motorbikes could be parked within the yard area and secured cycle storage could be provided within the yard area too, if so required. With regards to secured cycle storage, this matter could be dealt with by an appropriately worded condition should such provision be deemed necessary.

## 5. Conclusion

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- 5.1.1 This application seeks planning permission for the conversion of the former public house at 5-6 High Street and 10 North Street, Cleator Moor to provide 9no. flats.
- 5.1.2 This Statement appraised the design & access considerations of the proposed development.
- 5.1.3 It is considered that the proposed development represents the optimum viable alternative use of the building, having taken full cognizance of design and access and built heritage considerations.
- 5.1.4 Furthermore, as advised in the Planning & Heritage Statement, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in principle; that it represents sustainable development; and that it will not have any significant adverse impact upon the surrounding area in terms of visual, landscape, traffic and parking, surface water flooding, and other amenity, environmental, ecological or built heritage considerations. Furthermore, any impacts arising from the development would not be significant and would be outweighed by the benefits arising from returning the building to beneficial use.
- 5.1.5 In light of the above, it is hoped that the Local Planning Authority will look favourably upon this planning application and grant planning permission subject to appropriate conditions. Notwithstanding, we remain willing to discuss any aspect of the proposed development with the Local Planning Authority, should this be necessary and/or desirable.