

Design and access statement Rothersyke House holiday accommodation

Rothersyke House, Egremont, Cumbria CA22 2UD



Introduction

The proposal is to convert an area of redundant land within the grounds of Rothersyke House, Egremont into a productive tourist-based business comprising of 3no pods/units. Rothersyke House is located approximately 2 miles from Egremont towards the coast and 4 miles from St Bees. The existing site is sloped rough pasture with some mature trees lying alongside a minor road that has been closed to through traffic for over ten years following damage to the bank supporting the road by the river Ehen some distance above the site. Consideration has been given to all locations in the ownership of the applicant at Rothersyke House and it is considered this location offers the greatest opportunity in regards to views south and safe access and egress from the site without impacting the existing house and occupation. The site lies just off the B5345 and is within a few minutes of Hadrian's Cycleway Route 72 and 1.7miles from a railway station on the national rail network, ideally located to accommodate users of this sustainable tourism option.

Rothersyke House was built by Rum and Wine Merchant Henry Jefferson in the late 1770's and the property and family had links to William Wordsworth. The house and site are in an elevated position with views towards the coast and on to the Isle of Man. The proposed site is below the main house in an area formally used as rough pasture and paddocks. Whilst it has a direct connection to the house and gardens, it is situated down the hill for privacy. The area is rural by nature and within easy distance of Egremont, St Bees, Whitehaven and the Lake District. The location is ideal for tourist related business and diversification and would be a relevant use for what is currently unproductive land.

Pre-application advice was sought under reference number PAA/22/0024 for a greater number of units and an associated swimming pool on the site. Our client has taken into account the comments received and has paired back the scheme by some measure to make it more amenable to Planning Policy.

The proposed application is for approval in principle including site layout, parking, access and scale (number of units) with all other matters reserved. Submitted site plans show the proposed location of units but indicative unit footprints only and final pod design and scale is to be agreed by reserved matters.

Relevant Planning Policies

The following policies are relevant to this application with further consideration of the emerging local plan 2021-2038.

Planning Policy ST1 – Strategic Development Principles

A Economic and Social Sustainability

i) Support the development of energy infrastructure, related economic clusters, rural diversification and tourism in appropriate locations

This development will promote rural diversification and tourism in what we considered is an appropriate location given its relation to the cycle network and ease of reach to the coastline and adjacent tourism sites. The site is currently redundant poor grazing land and the suggestion is for a low impact tourism related project that will provide much needed family holiday accommodation.

B Environmental Sustainability

i) Encourage development that minimises carbon emissions, maximises energy efficiency and helps us to adapt to the effects of climate change
iii) Protect, enhance and encourage the creation of new areas of green

infrastructure, recognising the important role that the natural environment and healthy ecosystems have to play in the future social and economic, as well as environmental sustainability of Copeland

v) Ensure that new development minimises waste and maximises opportunities for recycling

vi) Minimise the need to travel, support the provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and measures that encourage its use

There is an opportunity to provide low-carbon holiday accommodation with a light footprint that will protect the habitat and landscape in which it is sited. The site will be natural and green by nature, with existing trees retained and managed and green space encouraged. With its very close proximity to cycle route 72, it will encourage sustainable transport in the form of cycling tourists and its rural location is ideal for this kind of low-impact, highly sustainable travel. Our client would seek to install low carbon infrastructure, including electric charging points, to further encourage sustainable travel in this location and secure cycle storage facilities for the pods.

Planning Policy ST2 – Spatial Development Strategy

ii) Supporting moderate levels of development reflecting the respective scale and functions of the smaller towns (Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom), and contributing to the regeneration of the town centres

C Restricting development outside the defined settlement boundaries to that which has a proven requirement for such a location, including:

v) Land uses characteristically located outside settlements, such as agriculture or forestry, farm diversification schemes or tourism activities requiring location in the countryside, or prisons

Camping type tourism accommodation, by its nature, tends to be located outside of defined settlements and glamping sites have a proven requirement for rural sites such as this in order to appeal to the market and ensure a successful take-up.

Planning policy DM9 Visitor Accommodation

Planning policy DM9 states ‘Proposals for new holiday caravans, chalets and/or camping sites or extensions to existing sites have adequate access arrangements and possess a high level of natural screening which, where necessary, is capable of reinforcement and Extension’.

This location is well screened in relation to adjacent properties and views and will be low density accommodation with good access arrangements. The site is accessed off a no through road and will be laid out in such a way as to provide accessible access throughout. The proposal is for holiday accommodation only in line with the policy related to occupancy conditions.

Planning Policy ER6 – Location of Employment

B Outside Whitehaven, the Key Service Centres, and the allocated sites, smaller scale economic development proposals will be considered on their merits, with the following matters being particularly important:

- justification for rural location*
- transport impact*
- vulnerability to flooding*
- impact on residential amenity and*
- impact on landscape character, settlement character and biodiversity*

Being small scale, the proposal will provide some employment opportunities in relation to the servicing and maintenance of the site. This application is by its nature benefited from being in a rural location as it provides the surroundings required of a successful tourism related business. The provision is for a quiet family friendly, small scale glamping experience, well suited to this rural location. In addition, the scale of the development will have very limited impact on transport in the area, with an insignificant contribution to traffic in the area (Sellafield creating most traffic movements in the general area, not tourism). It is likely to attract sustainable transport options, such as cycling to the location and provide employment opportunities in the local area. The development will have limited impact on the landscape character, designed to blend in, rather than dominate the existing surroundings. Again, it is a small-scale development with limited impact on its surroundings. Being a sloping site, there is no vulnerability to flooding in this location, the river Ehen being considerably lower than the site.

The proposal will to an extent support existing local employment as the self-catering users make use of local facilities – food purchases from local shops, use of local pubs, cafes and restaurants and the like as well as requiring local transport (buses, taxis). In addition, the development will require cleaning services, gardening services, tradespeople for the maintenance and upkeep of the pods and the site infrastructure.

Planning Policy ER10 – Renaissance through Tourism

The Council will maximise the potential of tourism in the Borough and will seek to:

A Expand tourism outside the Lake District National Park boundaries, with a complementary offer that takes pressure off the National Park's busiest locations, and delivers economic benefits in the Borough

B Locate new tourist accommodation, facilities and attractions where there is proven capacity for additional visitors to be accommodated without adverse environmental or amenity impacts, with consideration given to the following:

ii) Encourage development of an appropriate scale in the Key Service Centres of Cleator Moor, Millom and Egremont which takes pressure off more sensitive areas

iii) Support development requiring a rural location within the smaller villages and countryside, if proven necessary to enhance the Borough's existing place-bound assets

iv) Permit holiday accommodation which meets the requirements of Policy DM9

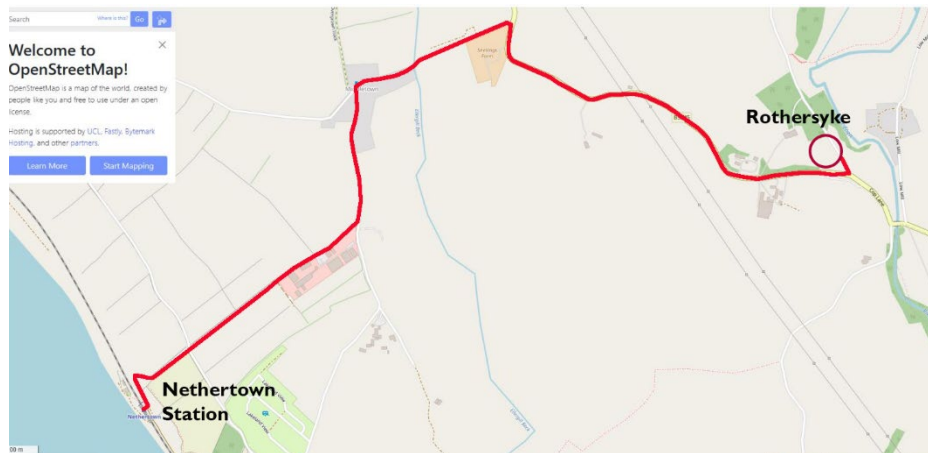
C Support appropriate tourism development which accords with the principles of sustainable development and does not compromise the special qualities and character of allocated Tourism Opportunity Sites, the area surrounding them or public access thereto, in the following locations:

ii) Ehen / Keekle Valleys

D Support appropriate developments which improve and enhance the quality of the tourism product

E Wherever possible tourism providers will be required to ensure that accommodation and attractions are well connected to other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling

It is suggested that this proposal meets many of the indicated criteria in Policy ER10, including the location of the development within the Ehen Valley and in close location to Egremont, taking pressure off areas within more sensitive locations. In addition, we feel that we have demonstrated the relevance of this proposal under policy DM9 and that this would be a sustainable tourism development. The location is well connected to the existing Cycle Routes and to existing tourism and walking opportunities both on the coast and back into the lake district national park. It is also only 1.7 miles (walking distance) from Nethertown Railway Station on the Cumbrian Coast Railway, both a tourist route in its own right and with strong connectivity to the rest of the national railway network.



Policy ENV5 – Protecting and Enhancing the Borough’s Landscapes

The Borough’s landscapes will be protected and enhanced by:

A Protecting all landscapes from inappropriate change by ensuring that development does not threaten or detract from the distinctive characteristics of that particular area

B Where the benefits of the development outweigh the potential harm, ensuring that the impact of the development on the landscape is minimised through adequate mitigation, preferably on-site

C Supporting proposals which enhance the value of the Borough’s landscapes

It is proposed that this development does not constitute an inappropriate change to the existing landscape, nor detract from the characteristics of this location. The low impact nature of this development, with a strong emphasis on retaining the rural feel and natural look of the site, will safeguard the landscape in this area.

Policy DM8 – Tourism Development in Rural Areas

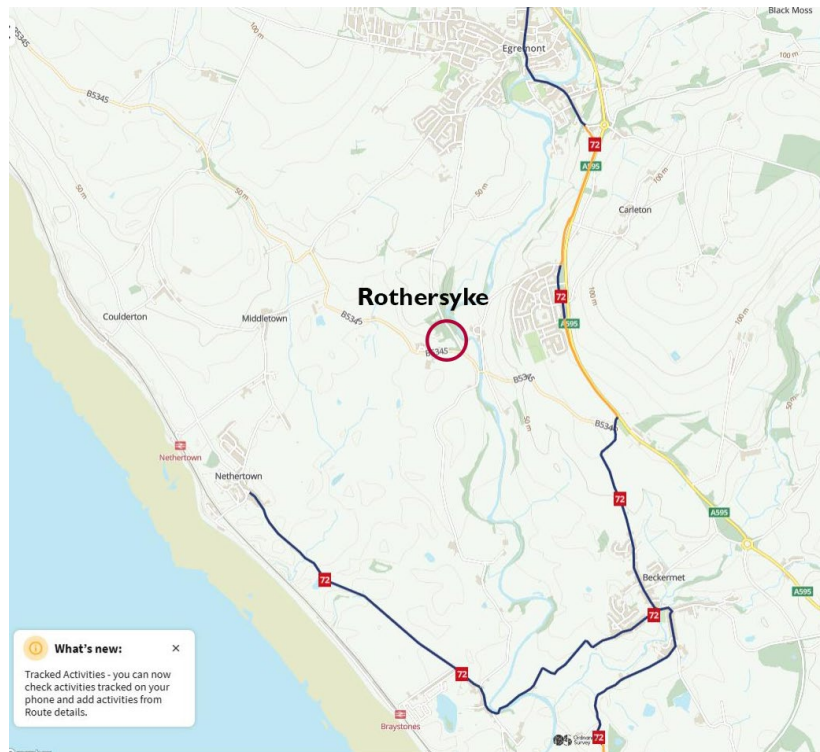
Outside the Tourism Opportunity Sites, tourism facilities will be permitted in rural areas where it involves small scale development and it:

A Is demonstrated to be necessary for enhancing the natural, cultural or heritage value of the place-bound asset; or it

B Involves the re-use, conversion or replacement of existing buildings on site

The development of new or extended buildings will only be considered favourably where there is a robust case that demonstrates that there is a genuine need that cannot be met through the conversion of existing rural buildings.

Within this location there are very few redundant buildings that can be re-purposed into tourism related opportunities. We feel that has been demonstrated that there is a need for low impact sustainable tourism in this area and that the location in particular to Cycle Route 72 (see map below), makes this a suitable location for rural tourism development. The development itself is small scale and low impact and will enhance the local area by providing good quality rural business in an otherwise under represented area.



Strategy Policy DS3PU – Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy in this policy directs the majority of development over the plan period to four towns, Whitehaven, Cleator Moor, Egremont and Millom and further locations including key service centres, local service centres, sustainable rural villages, rural villages and open countryside not listed. Whilst not specifically identified within this policy, the proposed site is very close to Egremont, which includes a focus on employment opportunities and is virtually within the settlement boundary of Thornhill. The site sits on the very outer edge of the location as identified in Fig 4: Settlement Hierarchy Copeland North and scoring 15 points or more. Thornhill is identified as a local service centre and development is identified as being defined as having a focus on supporting the retention of small-scale growth of existing services. Creating additional tourism opportunities within this location will further support existing business in Thornhill and further encourage growth and job opportunities.

Strategy Policy T1PU – Tourism Development

Whilst not within a settlement location identified in the Settlement Hierarchy Plan of the emerging Local Plan. Proposals for tourism development outside of defined settlements will be supported when the proposal is for a specific activity or function that requires a location that cannot be accommodated for within the principal town, key service centres or local service centres or the proposal enhances the borough's existing place bound assets. It is arguable that a 'retreat' proposal, by its nature a quiet reflective tourism space surrounded by nature, low density populations and accessing the countryside and views, cannot be sited within the settlement boundaries identified. By its very nature it requires a site exactly like the one proposed in order to make it a viable tourism development. The client has developed sites within Whitehaven and Cleator moor, neither of which is suitable for this type of development and suitable land is difficult to come by in other locations identified in the Settlement Hierarchy. Rothersyke House is ideally located within a key environment for low density retreat. It is also suitably located close to sustainable transport links being adjacent to the existing cycle routes and 1.7 miles (walking) from Nethertown Railway

Station (Cumbrian Coast Railway) and the coast. It is also in an area which contains complimentary (but not identical) tourist related business and services sited in the distance between Rothersyke House and the coast at Nethertown.

Strategy Policy T3PU – Caravans and Camping Sites for Short-Term Letting

Whilst the proposal is not within a settlement identified in the settlement hierarchy, it is close to both Egremont and Thornhill and is considered to be in a sustainable location given its accessibility to related transport links, cycle routes, walking routes and Nethertown Railway Station as identified previously.

The site Design

The site has been laid out in such a way as to enhance the topography and create private spaces within each of the three pod locations. A focus is placed on creating an accessible path from the proposed car parking area up the sloping site to each of the pods and to key picnic BBQ areas at either end of the site. Each of the three pods/chalets will have views over the existing paddocks towards the coast. They will be positioned in such a way that they will not look over each other or any other properties in the location and will be in a relatively secluded location among mature trees.

There has traditionally been a site entrance at the bottom of the field and this was intended to be utilised for this development. Following consultation with Highways, the proposed entrance has been moved up the site in order to meet the requirements for distance from the existing road junction. It should be noted that the public road is no longer a through road and no traffic other than occasional vehicles related to existing properties and access only, use it. As such, there is little traffic risk of entry and egress from the site in this location and where this no through road meets the B5345, there is good visibility and a wide junction. It is not possible to get full vision splays in this location, with a northern visibility splay of circa 65m obtainable from the proposed junction. Given the fact that there is no through traffic from the direction of Egremont and that the road only currently serves the applicant's property north of the site entrance, it is considered there is little risk of a reduced visibility splay creating any sort of safety hazard in this location. Given the location of the junction to the south, traffic will not have reached any relevant speeds prior to reaching the site entrance which is located 25m north of the junction.

The car parking area will be at the bottom of the site adjacent to the entrance and will be kept low key and of mostly sustainable construction with permeable surface treatments.

Accessibility

Paths on the site will be of a width and gradient to suit most users and disabled car-parking spaces will be provided on site.

The holiday accommodation will be in compliance with Part M requirements.