

## **Heritage Statement – Grindal House, Main Street, St Bees**

**Proposal:** Change of use to children's nursery



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October 2021

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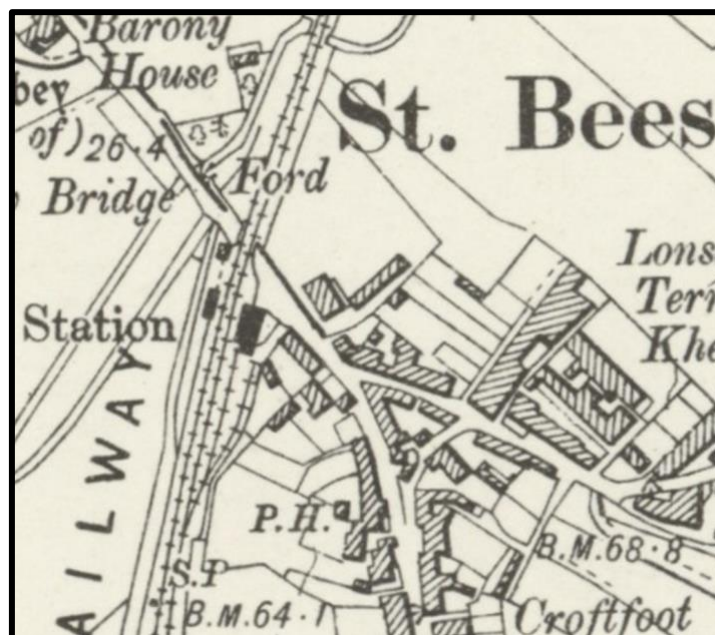


## 1.0 Introduction

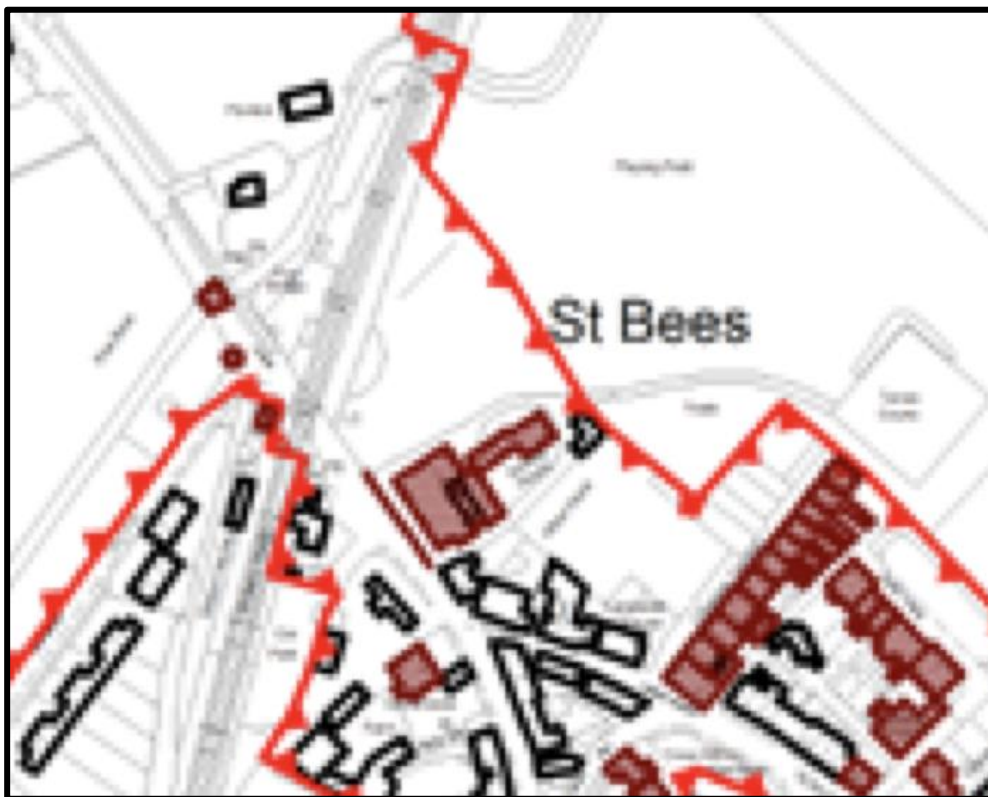
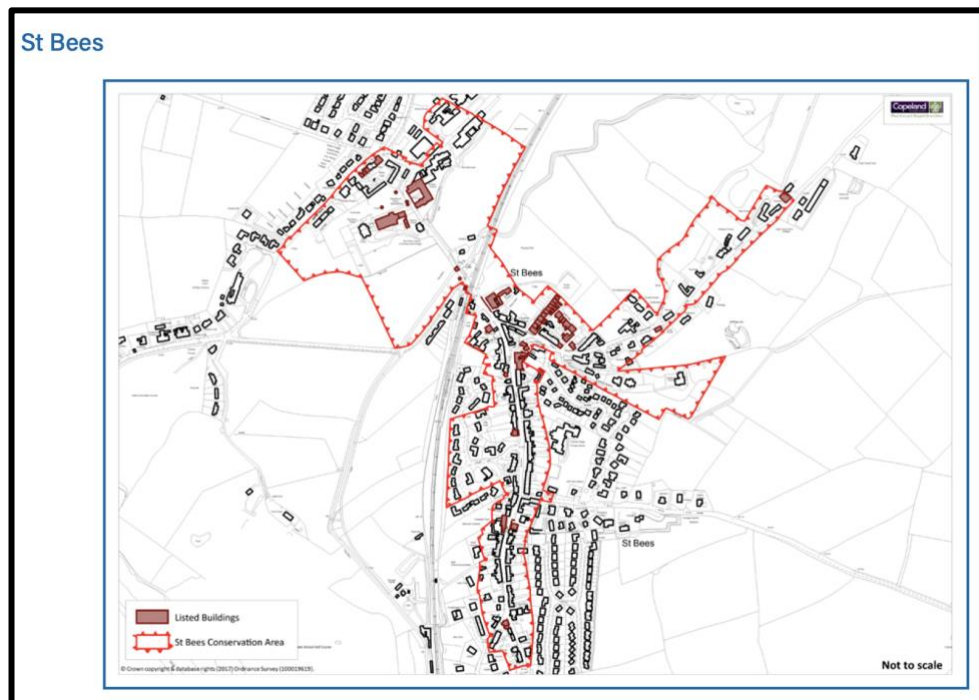
- 1.1 This heritage statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application at Grindal House, Main Street, St Bees.
- 1.2 The application is submitted in full covering matters relating to the development.
- 1.3 Section 2 of this Statement will set out the site's context, Section 3 covers the proposed development, Section 4 relates to the planning history of the site and surroundings, Section 5 will set out the context of heritage planning policy, Section 6 undertakes a heritage assessment of the assets in the locality and site, and Section 7 will draw together the conclusions.

## 2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The application relates to a large, detached building, located centrally within the village of St Bees. The village is mainly based around a single road running from north to south. To the northeast, the village is adjoined by the B5301 road between St Bees and Whitehaven. To southeast the village is connected to Egremont by road. The village is bounded by the beach to the west side.
- 2.2 The property adjoins the main road through St Bees village to the west, to the east other St Bees School curtilage land, to the south the residential curtilage of the dwelling 1 Main Street, and to the north it adjoins the railway line running through the village. The application site is close to the St Bees station.
- 2.3 The application site is situated within an established area within the village. It is located within walking distance of the St Bees Primary School, Village Hall and basic amenities in the village.
- 2.4 The 1888 Ordnance Survey Map below shows the application site:



- 2.5 St Bees village was designated as a Conservation Area in 1976 by Copeland Borough Council. A map of the Conservation Area is detailed below, followed by a more specific plan of the area around the Grindal House.





### 3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application is a full planning application for the change of use of the ground floor of Grindal House from secondary school accommodation comprising dormitory accommodation and classrooms, to a children's nursery. The property was formerly used for the above, but the use was ceased with the closure of St Bees School in 2015. While the main part of the school has since reopened, this property (and other separate buildings detached from the main campus) has been vacant since.
- 3.2 The proposed alterations to the property in terms of works to the actual building would comprise very minimal changes, with the main changes externally associated with the walls and grounds. Two openings in the garden type wall are proposed to be included in the front garden, to allow for circulation around the property, without leaving the site onto the public footpath. In addition, a new vehicular exit from the site is proposed to be made in the stone wall to the north of the building leading into the curtilage land. This is near to the location of a previous opening in the wall made a few years ago for an access for work associated with railway improvements work.
- 3.3 The existing access to the south of the building will form the 'in' to the site, with the new opening to the north as the 'out'. The gatepost to the entrance will be relocated to extend the width of this opening to 4.0m. The visibility splay required for the exit is over the adjacent front wall to the property and within the applicant's site. The stone wall adjacent to the exit from the site will be reduced in height to allow this, and the Listed sandstone wall to the frontage will be relocated closer to the building, so it is retained in its entirety, but is re-set outside of the visibility splay from the vehicular exit. The area to the frontage of the wall up to the rear of the footway will be grassed as it currently is.
- 3.4 The internal alterations proposed consist of a new door opening between the rooms noted as G 1.07 and G 1.09 on the ground floor and blocking up the door in room G 1.11.
- 3.5 The property will have 12 in curtilage parking spaces to the rear of the building, also including a drop-off area for the parents using the nursery, although the plot could accommodate more parking for cars if necessary.

### 4.0 Planning History

- 4.1 The following are previous planning applications on the building:
- 96/0767 - change of use to office accommodation for, temporary period of up to 12 months – Approved
  - 97/0207 - Listed Building consent for internal alterations, to provide study bedrooms and classrooms on ground floor - Approved
  - 4/98/0383 - new enclosed fire escape – Approved
  - 4/98/0391 - Listed Building consent for works associated with new enclosed fire escape – Approved
  - 4/01/0037 - satellite television dish – Approved

- 4/01/0038 - Listed Building consent for satellite tv dish – Approved
- 4/12/2171/OL1 - Listed Building consent for re-roofing & replacement windows - Approved

## 5.0 Planning Policy

### Copeland Local Plan Policy

- 5.1 Policy DM27 of the adopted Copeland Local Plan is the policy regarding Heritage Assets. This states:

*Development which affects Listed Buildings or their setting will only be permitted where it:*

- i) Respects the architectural and historic character of the building*
- ii) Avoids any substantial or total demolition, or any demolition that is not related to proposed development affecting the building*
- iii) Does not have a significant adverse effect on the setting or important views of the building*
- iv) Involves a change of use to all or part of the listed building which contributes to the conservation and overall economic viability of the building, and where the use can be implemented without any adverse alterations to the building.*

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs

- 5.2 Paragraph 197 states:

*‘In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’*

- 5.3 Paragraph 199 states:

*‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.’*

- 5.4 Paragraph 200 states:

*‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

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- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II\* listed buildings, grade I and II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.'*

5.5 Paragraph 201 states:

*'Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.'*

## 6.0 Heritage Assets

6.1 There are two designated assets within the application site boundary, the building itself and the wall to the frontage. There are also 3 listed buildings (or structures) within this area of St Bees, which are as follows:

- The Grade II Listed St Bees Signal Box;
- The Grade II Listed Stone House Farm;
- The Grade II Listed 1-11 Lonsdale Terrace.

### Heritage Assets outside of the application site

6.2 The above properties are noted on the Copeland Borough Council Mapping below in red:



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6.3 Stone House (noted by Historic England as St Bees 12/90 Stone House II) is located approximately 30 metres to the southwest of the boundary of the site within St Bees village.

6.4 The Historic England text on this Building is *"House, dated 1712; later alterations. North gable rebuilt in late C20. Steeply pitched graduated slate roof; kneelers and rendered chimney to north end. Symmetrical 2-storey, 3-bay, front. Central panelled door in corniced doorcase carrying ornately framed and pedimented datestone; weathered, but ..s: Stainton can be read. 2 sashes in stone surrounds to each floor, upper ones with glazing bars"*

6.5 Below is a photograph of Stone House:



6.6 There would be very little visibility of the site from Stone House and vice-versa, due to the angle between the properties and the buildings in between, including stable block outbuildings at Stone House. As such, there is no impact on this heritage asset from the proposed development.

6.7 The St Bees Signal Box (noted by Historic England as Furness Railway Type 3 signal box built 1891) is located approximately 80 metres to the northwest of the boundary of the site within St Bees village.

6.8 The Historic England text on this Building is *"St Bees Signal Box is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons: \* Architecture: not withstanding the loss of the original glazing pattern, St Bees, with its tapering base, snecked stonework and high pitched roof is an unusually architectural signal box which is reasonably well preserved. \* Representative: as one of only two surviving examples of a Furness Railway Type 3 signal box: an adventurous architectural design dating to circa 1875, possibly by the practice of Paley and Austin. \* Interior: the survival of the original 1891 Railway Signalling Company lever frame adds to the special interest."*

6.9 Below is a photograph of the Signal Box:

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- 6.10 While the sites are close by, there is very little interaction between the two, due to the nature of the surroundings. The Signal Box is surrounded by modern equipment associated with the railway including the pedestrian footbridge, the white painted metal fencing, the crossing barrier and the road signals and signage. As such, there is no impact on this heritage asset from the proposed development.
- 6.11 Lonsdale Terrace (noted by Historic England as NX 91 SE ST BEES LONSDALE TERRACE St Bees 12/81 Nos 1-11 (consec) G.V. II ) is located approximately 80 metres to the southeast of the boundary of the site within St Bees village.
- 6.12 Below is a photograph of Lonsdale Terrace:





- 6.13 While the sites are close by, there is very little interaction between the two, due to the nature of the surroundings. Grindal House is set at a lower land level, and the proposed external changes are to the frontage, which is not visible from this location. In addition there is a grassed area in between the properties with some mature trees. As such, there is no impact on this heritage asset from the proposed development.

Heritage Assets in the application site:

- 6.14 Grindal House itself is noted by Historic England as 12/60 Grindal House G.V. II.
- 6.15 The Historic England text on this Building is *"House, mid C19 with later additions and alterations. Main block incised stucco with rusticated quoins to banded ground floor. String between ground and 1st floors, sill band to 2nd floor; eaves cornice with egg and dart moulding. Wing adjoining south end incised stucco with eaves cornice. Hipped, graduated slate roofs; corniced, rendered, chimneys and pedimented dormers to main block. Symmetrical 3-storey, 3-bay main block has central panelled door in rusticated architrave with tripartite sash to either side; 3 sashes to each floor above (2nd floor 16-pane), all with rusticated lintels. 3 sashes to each floor and cellar on north return. 2-storey 2-bay wing has tripartite sashes to ground floor. Single sashes above, one 16-pane. All windows in architraves.."*
- 6.16 Below is a photograph of the House:



- 6.17 In terms of actual works to the building, they would comprise very minimal alterations. However, two opening in the garden type wall are proposed to be included in the front garden, to allow for circulation around the property, without leaving the site onto the public footpath. In addition, a new vehicular exit from the site is proposed to be made in the stone

wall to the north of the building leading into the curtilage land. This is in the location of a previous opening in the wall made a few years ago for an access for work associated with railway improvements work, for which no Listed Building consent was registered. A parking area will be formed in the curtilage of the building adjacent to the flat roofed rear extensions, but this will have very minimal impact on the building and will not be visible from any public viewpoint of the building. In terms of internal works, this consists of a new door opens between two rooms and blocking up one doorway. Therefore, the impact of the proposed development on the heritage asset is considering to be minimal and appropriate to allow the building to be brought into use as the nursery.

None of the above features are included in the listing information as detailed above.

- 6.18 The Listed wall (noted by Historic England as St Bees 12/61 Forecourt wall, gate, & end piers to front of Grindal House) is located to the frontage of Grindal House adjacent to the roadside.
- 6.19 The Historic England text on this Building is *“Forecourt wall contemporary with house; stone, c4 ft high on plinth with moulded top rail. 4 panels pierced with slits and separated by square section piers to either side of central gate; octagonal gate piers have plinth and corniced ogee top..”*
- 6.20 Below is a photograph of the Wall:



- 6.21 With regards to the Listed sandstone wall to the frontage, this will be relocated closer to the building, so it is retained in its entirety, but is re-set outside of the visibility splay from the vehicular exit. This distance of the setback is 2.4m. The area to the frontage of the wall up to the rear of the footway will be grassed as it currently is.

- 6.22 It is apparent that the relocation of the Listed sandstone wall causes harm to that Listed structure. However, this was considered to be the most appropriate option to allow for visibility from the new access rather than amending the structure and form of the wall, which would cause more significant change to it. No other use will be able to re-use the building without the formation of a new access, given that the existing one is sub-standard. Therefore, it is the only way that the building will have a future.
- 6.23 The text of paragraph 201 of the NPPF is exactly what has led to the planning submission now submitted to the Local Authority for consideration. Again, it is clearly acknowledged that harm will be caused by the proposed development in the form of the relocation of the wall which is Listed in its own right. However, as detailed in point a of paragraph 201, the nature of the heritage asset (being a 1.22m high wall located in a visibility splay) prevents all reasonable reuse of the site. No change of use application would be acceptable without highway works given that the existing access is single width, with poor visibility. No other purchaser of the building has been found during the substantial marketing period, and the current owners are a charity organisation, who could find no use for it.
- 6.24 On the final point, it is considered that the harm is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use. In terms of public benefit, many residents in the village are aware of the proposed development and have indicated their support to the applicant.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 There is not considered to be any impact on the nearby Listed Buildings within the village from the proposed development site due to the distance between the site and Listed properties, and the existing topography and vegetation in between.
- 7.2 It is considered that the impact upon Grindal House itself is minimal due to scale of the changes proposed to the actual building.
- 7.3 It is considered that there is minimal impact from the proposed development from a heritage perspective in terms of the St Bees Conservation Area.
- 7.5 The development will provide a suitable future use for the building which will ensure that it is retained and maintained as a significant Listed Building within a Conservation Area.
- 7.6 It is acknowledged that harm will be caused by the proposed development in the form of the relocation of the Listed wall, but that the harm is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into a viable use.

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