



## **The Commercial, 5-6 High Street, Cleator Moor Cumbria CA25 5AH**

### **Heritage Statement**



15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

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## 1. Introduction and Project Background

- 1.1 In August 2022, Williams Conservation Surveying Limited were commissioned by Mr Ali and Mr Mohamid through their agents Keystone Design Associates Limited to prepare a Heritage Statement in relation to The Commercial, 5-6 High Street, Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5AH.
- 1.2 The Heritage Statement was requested by the Local Authority, Copeland Borough Council, to provide additional information and justification in relation to the conservation and heritage impact of proposals for the refurbishment of the building which, although not listed, is located within a conservation area. The proposals comprise, in summary, conversion of the former public house into a retail unit at ground floor level with six residential flats above.
- 1.3 The proposals are subject to an application for Planning Permission which was made to the Local Authority under application reference 4/21/2299/0F1 and validated on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The request for a Heritage Statement was included within comments provided by the Local Authority's Conservation Officer dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021 which assessed the impact of the proposals upon the building and the wider conservation area.
- 1.4 The main purpose of the Heritage Statement is to provide details of the history and development of the site and an assessment of its significance to assist the Local Planning Authority in determining the application, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF).
- 1.5 The Heritage Statement will also include a review of the Conservation Officer's initial comments in response to the original scheme of development and will provide a commentary upon the revised drawings which are to accompany this document. This will amount to a resubmission of the proposals taking account of the Officer's comments and other findings made during our own site and archival research.

## 2. Research Methodology

- 2.1 To inform our understanding of the site and its development, a site visit was undertaken to The Commercial and the surrounding parts of the Cleator Moor Conservation Area on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Weather during the site visit was overcast, clearing later to sunshine. Information was gathered using manual note taking and digital photography. Photographs were taken using an iPhone 7 front camera and stored in JPEG format. The visit was limited to the external areas of the building and the surrounding streets as there was no safe access available to the interior.
- 2.2 In order to understand the historic development of the site we have completed both online and offline research including a search of CASCAT (the online Cumbria Archives catalogue) and an in-person visit to the Cumbria Archive Service at Whitehaven, also on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022. This has yielded a range of primary sources (notably archive drawings) and secondary sources including published local history accounts and photographs. In addition, an in-person visit was made to Cleator Moor Library during our site visit to the area to review local history publications.

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### 3. Site Location and Description

*Refer to Appendix A – Site and Listed Buildings Plan*

- 3.1 The site is located at 5-6 High Street, Cleator Moor, Cumbria CA25 5AH. The building occupies a plot bounded by High Street to the south, North Street to the west, No. 7 High Street to the east, and a residential nursing home on Cross North Street to the north.
- 3.2 The site is divided into two distinct parts. Facing High Street, to the south of the plot, is Nos. 5-6 High Street which is of three storeys in height and dates to the inauguration of the public house during the c. 1880s. Facing North Street, to the north of the plot, is No. 10 North Street which is of two storeys in height and comprises two earlier terraced houses likely to date from the c. 1850s, formerly a separate public house known as The Albert and subsequently absorbed into the ownership of The Commercial.
- 3.3 Within the wider vicinity of the site is the town centre of Cleator Moor and a set of civic buildings including the Town Hall, Library and Memorial Fountain which are grouped around the Market Place to the south on the opposite side of High Street from the Commercial. As such, The Commercial is visible from and forms a key part of the centre of the town.
- 3.4 The topography of the area is a raised plateau sloping gently eastwards towards the River Ehen at the eastern edge of the town, which also marks the westernmost point of the Lake District National Park. As such, High Street has an elevated view looking eastwards into the National Park from The Commercial, with the Fells above Ennerdale Water clearly visible.

### 4. Statutory designations and policy constraints

*Refer to Appendix A – Site and Listed Buildings Plan, and Appendix B – Conservation Area Plan*

- 4.1 The Commercial is considered a “Designated Heritage Asset” for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) as a result of its inclusion within the Cleator Moor Conservation Area, designated by Copeland Borough Council. In addition, this conservation area is included on Historic England’s Heritage at Risk Register in light of the deteriorating condition of many of its buildings. The Commercial is not locally listed, and to the best of our knowledge there is no scheme of local listing in operation under this local authority.
- 4.2 There are several nationally listed buildings in close proximity to The Commercial, the settings of which the proposed refurbishment of the The Commercial could affect either positively, neutrally or negatively. These include the Town Hall, Library, Memorial Fountain and Phoenix House, all of which are listed at Grade II. The visual impact of the refurbishment proposals put forward for The Commercial upon the setting of these Listed Buildings would be a material consideration in relation to the associated application for planning permission.

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## 5. Historic Development

*Refer to Appendix C – Historic Building Plans, Appendix D – Historic Ordnance Survey Mapping, and Appendix E – Historic Photograph*

- 5.1 In the post-Roman era, the locality which would become Cleator Moor formed part of the early medieval Kingdom of Strathclyde, the English component of which (south of the Solway Firth) became the country of Cumberland throughout the later medieval and early modern periods. Local Government reorganisation in 1974 (proposed to be reversed in 2023) removed the historic county and created Cumbria by combining it with Westmorland and Lancashire over the Sands. Despite this, the area to the north and west of the Lake District retains a distinctive character, and an architectural tradition more closely related to that of southern Scotland, especially in the use of plain rendered (or in Scotland, *harled*) walls with painted stone window surrounds.
- 5.2 Although there was a much older settlement at Cleator village, the modern town of Cleator Moor only developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in an area which had previously been entirely rural. The town grew in response to the discovery of high-quality iron ore in the area and its exploitation from the c. 1860s onwards. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Cleator Moor had become known as “Little Ireland” as a result of the high proportion of the occupants born in Ireland, or with family ties to the country. Historic Ordnance Survey mapping shows that even in the mid-1860s the area was largely rural with small, isolated areas of terraced housing and iron mining, however by the 1890s the town was fully developed had largely assumed its modern form.
- 5.3 A detailed account of the development of The Commercial public house is provided by Caesar Caine’s local history account “Cleator and Cleator Moor Past and Present”. Although a precise date has not been established, Caine suggests that The Commercial post-dates the 1851 census and was first constructed during the c. 1870s. For a short time, it was known as the “Beehive Inn” before changing its name to The Commercial in c. 1885. Ordnance Survey mapping shows the building was preceded by an area of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing but had been rebuilt in its modern form by the 1890s at the latest. The same map series identifies that at this time there were two public houses on the site, the Commercial and The Albert, the latter likely to have been formed from earlier terraced housing.
- 5.4 The name change from The Beehive to The Commercial of 1885 corresponded with a programme of building works recorded in three sets of plans dating to May 25<sup>th</sup>, June 18<sup>th</sup> and June 22<sup>nd</sup> of that year and conserved in the Whitehaven Archive Centre. The proposals comprised the installation of a new bottle / jug bar and a snug, with the three iterations relating to comments made on each by the Local Authority, at that time the Cleator Moor Local Board. At the time of our visit to Whitehaven Archive Centre, only the plans dated May 25<sup>th</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup> could be inspected as the final agreed plans of June 22<sup>nd</sup> were damaged and not available for inspection.
- 5.5 The landlord responsible for the building works of 1885 was Mr John Murray, who remained in position until 1901 at the latest. Directories reproduced in Caesar Caine’s account referenced above identified the landlord as being George Kirkpatrick in 1901 and 1910, and Thomas Phillips in 1914 and 1924. Several more landlords are recorded by the same source during the second quarter of the twentieth century, including George Horne (1925), Deborah Spedding (1929), John Carson (1934) and Hannah Margaret Carson (1938).
- 5.6 In 1941 the building was the subject of a further programme of internal refurbishment works and the corresponding plans are again retained by Whitehaven Archive Centre. These were submitted

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on behalf of the Cleator Moor Brewing Company to the Local Authority, which at this time was Ennerdale Rural District Council. The works were relatively modest, comprising the installation of a new fireplace, the removal of an internal partition and the redecoration of the lounge. The plans were dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 1941 and were completed by R. R. Cornforth, Architect, of Crosthwaite House, Workington. They include a detailed drawing of the proposed fireplace which was in an elegant late Art Deco style.

- 5.7 By 1943 the ownership of The Commercial had passed to the Matthew Brown Brewery based at the Lion Brewery in Blackburn, although documentation from applications to the local authority suggests that this arrangement involved retention of the Cleator Moor Brewing Company name and some local brewing capacity. From this date until 1966 the pub was operated by Eleanor and Charlie Teasdale as landlords along with their son and daughter in law Charles and Doris Teasdale as assistants, a period detailed in Caesar Caine's account of the development of the development of the property.
- 5.8 The departure of the Teasdale family in the mid-1960s corresponded with a final phase of refurbishment and building works carried out on behalf of the Matthew Brown Brewery and for which the architectural plans again survive in Whitehaven Archive Centre. The plans were submitted to Ennerdale Rural District Council on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1965 and allowed for the construction of a new lounge bar and public bar within the existing building.
- 5.9 According to Caesar Caine's account, between 1966 and 1969, the landlord was Alan Blake of Chorley, Lancashire, after which there was an extended tenancy of some 27 years held by John and Anne Pearson between 1969 and 1997. The next recorded landlords of The Commercial were Arthur and Joyce McCarron (1997-2000) during whose tenancy the pub was combined with The Albert public house to the north of the site to form the present layout. The final known landlords were Joe Williamson and Joyce McAlone (2000-2002) and Tony and Lorraine Rayson (2002). The Commercial was refurbished in 2015 but eventually closed in as a public house in 2016.

## 6. Building Description

### *Refer to Appendix F – Site Photographs*

- 6.1 The building is of two distinct parts, these are The Commercial public house itself, to the front (south) of the site and No. 10 North Street, formerly The Albert public house and latterly part of The Commercial, to the rear (north). The Commercial is of three storeys in height whilst the former Albert public house is of two storeys in height, the whole forming an "L" shape in relation to the High Street. At the corner of the block is the building's most distinctive and recognisable feature, a full height curved corner section, formerly providing signage for the public house, with a decorative curved Dutch style gable above.
- 6.2 To both parts of the building, the roofs are of conventional double pitched form and the roof coverings, where these survive, are of local Cumbrian slate. Where visible, the ridge tiles are of local red St Bees sandstone. Rainwater gutters and downpipes are also of traditional black painted cast iron. Several chimney stacks survive, and to the former Albert public house there is a roof line visible to the chimneys indicating that the roof profile has been slightly lowered.
- 6.3 The external walls of both parts of the building are of sandstone faced with a white painted render. The windows have stone surrounds to all sides, a typical feature of vernacular buildings in the former county of Cumberland and the south of Scotland where the stone is often picked out

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in a different colour to the surrounding render or rubble stonework. To the High Street and North Street elevations, however, the stone surrounds are painted white to match the render. Much of the render is ashlar lined or scored to imitate finished stone. A rebuilt section of walling facing North Street indicates the likely position of a former bottle bar or off sales department.

- 6.4 To the rear courtyard elevation some of the original red St Bee's sandstone walls remain visible, and a surviving early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph suggests that this was previously exposed to the main elevations, with the render covering a more recent addition. Painted stone window surrounds also survive to the rear courtyard elevation giving an impression of the previous appearance of the main elevations.
- 6.5 The second floor of The Commercial is partially located within the eaves, and windows are provided to this area by rendered masonry dormer structures with decorative timber fascia boards and finials, of which there are two to the High Street elevation and three to the North Street elevation. All of the window units themselves are at present double glazed UPVC vertical sliding sash windows of one-over-one form; it is likely that these replaced original timber sliding sash windows of a similar configuration. The original timber joinery, including decorative fascia boarding to the dormer windows, still survives.

## 7. Assessment of Heritage Significance

- 7.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (the NPPF) requires the significance of a "Heritage Asset" to be considered under three headings: Archaeological Interest; Architectural and Artistic Interest; and Historic Interest. It is not considered that The Commercial retains any Archaeological Interest, however the building may be regarded as being of some modest local Architectural and Historic Interest.
- 7.2 The local importance of the building was evident however, albeit anecdotally, during our site visit as many local people expressed an interest and spoke to us unprompted about the building. Considerable affection for and attachment to the building, its importance to the town and the memories it holds for many local people was evident from these conversations.

## 8. The Amended Proposals and Conservation Design Considerations

- 8.1 The proposals resubmitted to Copeland Borough Council alongside this Heritage Statement under application reference 4/21/2299/0F1 comprise the conversion of The Commercial to a ground floor shop with six flats above. This includes an extension to increase the height of the rear portion of the building to three storeys bringing this into line with the front portion.
- 8.2 In response to the Conservation Officer's comments on the original proposals dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021, the following specific changes have been made to the proposed refurbishment and extension works:
- Clarification that the replacement roof coverings will match the existing slate tiles and St Bee's red sandstone ridge tiles;
  - Retention and conservation in-situ of all of the existing chimney stacks to The Commercial;
  - Retention and conservation of existing cast iron downpipes;
  - Retention and conservation of the existing decorative timber joinery fascia boards to the dormer windows;
  - Replacement of existing poor quality UPVC windows with new timber sliding sashes;

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- Clarification that new external doors will be of traditional panelled timber form throughout;
- Improvements to the proposed shop front design approach, utilising previous signage locations and referencing the adopted Copeland shop front design guidance;
- Provision of a section detail of the proposed shop front.

## 9. Assessment of Impact and Conclusions

- 9.1 The NPPF (Section 16) requires proposals affecting Designated Heritage Assets to be assessed in terms of their impact upon the significance of the structure or feature as set out in Section 8 above. In particular, the preferred terminology of the NPPF is for the applicant to indicate whether the proposals involve any “harm” to the Heritage Asset and in turn whether that harm is “substantial”.
- 9.2 If any “harm” identified to the significance of a Designated Heritage Asset is deemed to be “less than substantial” then Paragraph 202 of Section 16 of the NPPF applies. This states that “...this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.”
- 9.3 In this instance, the Designated Heritage Asset concerned is the Cleator Moor Conservation Area, of which The Commercial forms a part. As noted in the Conservation Area Assessment, The Commercial makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and sits at a key location within it, opposite the most locally significant civic buildings within the town including the local government offices, library and Memorial Fountain.
- 9.4 The proposals as amended would facilitate the refurbishment of The Commercial, the retention and conservation of the surviving traditional building materials forming part of the structure, and its ongoing productive use as part of the town centre. As such, it is considered that the scheme would enhance the Conservation Area and therefore that for the purposes of the NPPF there is no “harm” to the significance of the Designated Heritage Asset. As such, the proposals are considered to comply with the requirements of the NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

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## 10. Sources

*Unpublished Archival sources: Cumbria Archive Service, Whitehaven Archive Centre*

SRDE/3/PLANS1/525

Internal alterations, Commercial Hotel, Cleator Moor for Cleator Moor Brewing Co.

Ennerdale Rural District Council: building control plans

26 Mar 1941

Whitehaven

SRDE/3/PLANS2/6555

Alteration to licenced premises, Commercial Hotel, High Street, Cleator Moor for Mathew Brown...

Ennerdale Rural District Council: building control plans

18 May 1965

Whitehaven

SRDEB/3/PLANS/135

The Beehive Inn (Commercial Hotel), High Street, Cleator Moor: Alterations; For John Murray

18 Jun 1885

Whitehaven

SRDEB/3/PLANS/136

The Commercial Hotel, High Street, Cleator Moor: Alterations; For John Murray

22 Jun 1885

Whitehaven

### *Published sources*

Duffy, T. (2019) *Cleator Moor Revealed: An Illustrated History*. Independently published.

Caine, C. (1988) *Cleator and Cleator Moor Past and Present*. Michael Moon, Whitehaven.

Woodford, S. (2021) *Cleator Moor Conservation Area Appraisal*. Copeland Borough Council, Whitehaven.

Woodford, S. (2021) *Copeland Shop Front Design Guide*. Copeland Borough Council, Whitehaven.

### *Online sources*

National Heritage List (Historic England) accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

National Library of Scotland Georeferenced Ordnance Survey maps accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022:

<https://maps.nls.uk/os/index.html>

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## Appendix A: Site and Listed Buildings Plan



Extract from the National Heritage List (Historic England / Ordnance Survey; Not reproduced to scale) showing The Commercial outlined in red and nearby Listed Buildings identified by blue triangles.

The Listed Buildings and their respective grades are identified as follows:

1. Local Government Offices (Grade II)
2. Public Library (Grade II)
3. Memorial Fountain (Grade II)
4. Former Cooperative Supermarket (Phoenix House) (Grade II)
5. Nos. 13-20 High Street (Grade II)

Baseline mapping: Historic England / Ordnance Survey

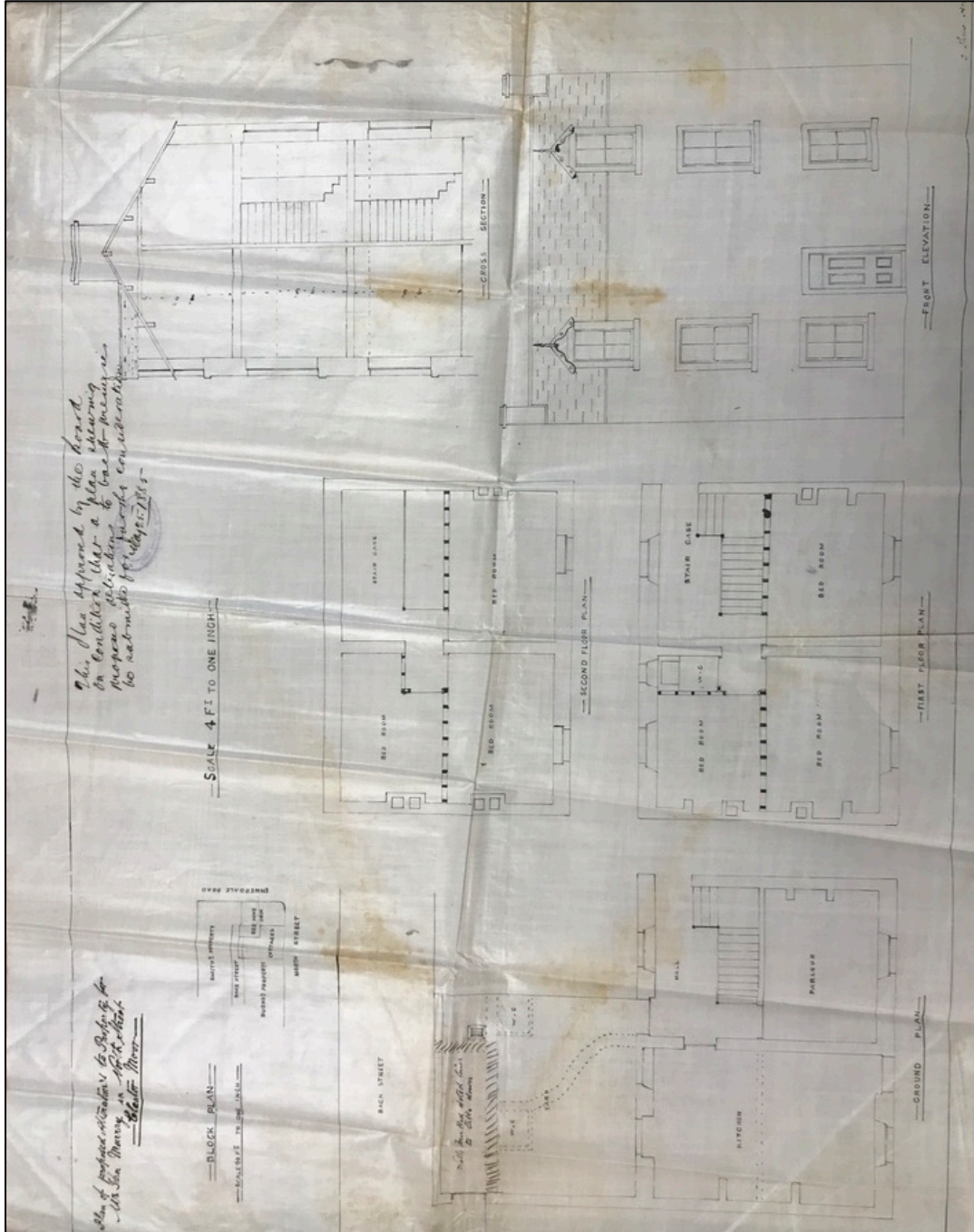
## Appendix B: Conservation Area Plan



Extract from the Copeland Conservation Area Appraisal (Copeland Borough Council 2021) showing the extent of the Conservation Area in context with the Town Centre. The site is highlighted in blue.

Baseline mapping: Ordnance Survey / Copeland Borough Council.

Appendix C: Historic Building Plans



Proposed alterations dated May 25<sup>th</sup> 1885 (Catalogue reference SRDEB/3/PLANS/135).  
 Proposals comprised the installation of a new bottle / jug bar and snug.  
 Superseded by revised plans dated 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1885, in fragile condition and not available for inspection.

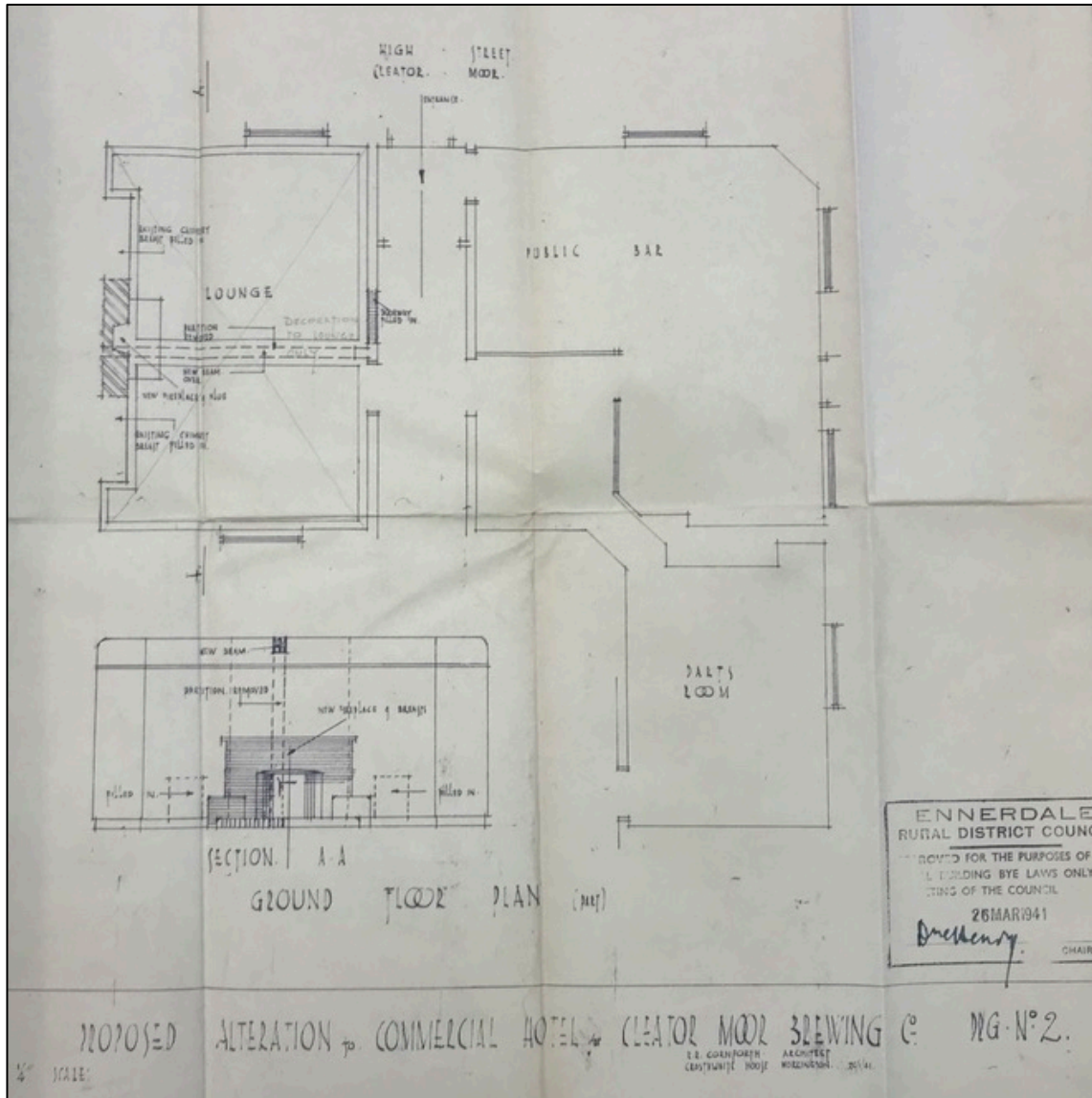
Plan reproduced courtesy of Cumbria Archive Service, Whitehaven.

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Proposed alterations dated 26<sup>th</sup> March 1941 (SRDE/3/PLANS1/525)

Proposals comprised installation of a new fireplace, removal of partition and new decorations to lounge.

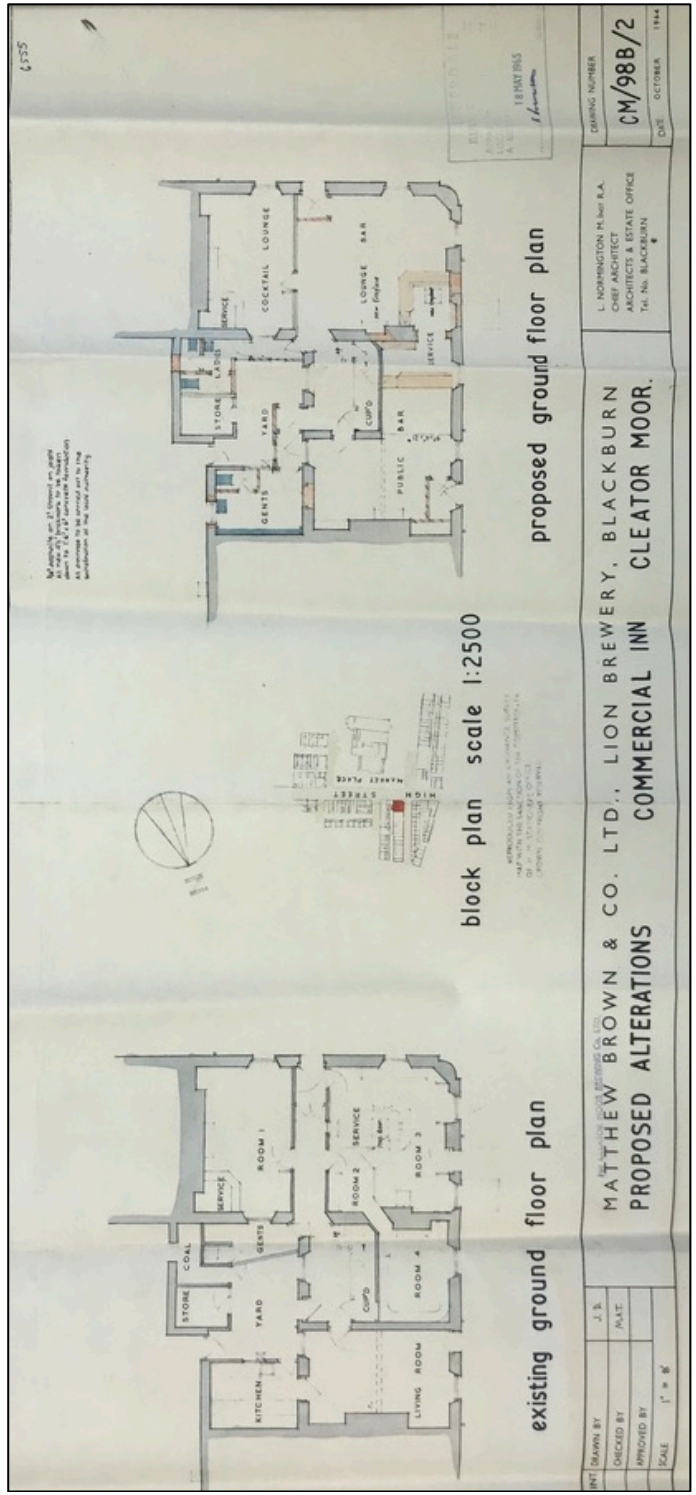
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Proposed alterations dated 18<sup>th</sup> May 1965 (SRDE/3/PLANS2/6555).  
 Proposals comprised a new lounge bar and public bar.

Plan reproduced courtesy of Cumbria Archive Service, Whitehaven.

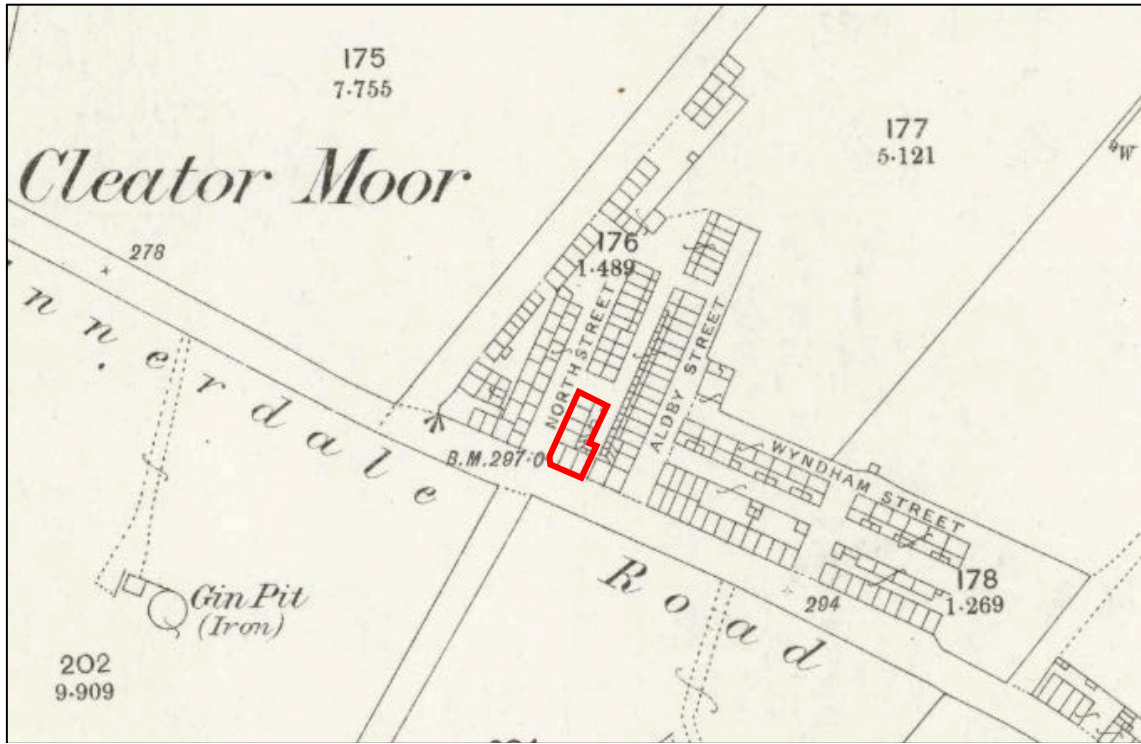
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## Appendix D: Historic Ordnance Survey mapping



Ordnance Survey 25 inch to one mile series, surveyed 1860, published 1863. The approximate outline of the site is highlighted in red. Not reproduced to scale.

In the 1860s, this part of Cleator Moor was in the earliest stages of development with a small number of terraced streets already completed. The future site of The Commercial was occupied by terraced housing facing onto North Street and Ennerdale Road. The houses each have rear yards with outhouses.



Ordnance Survey 25 inch to one mile series, surveyed 1898, published 1899. The approximate outline of the site is highlighted in red. Not reproduced to scale.

By the 1890s, Cleator Moor had been transformed into a busy industrial town with extensive terraced housing, public houses and hotels, a school, police station, market and library.

By this date, the terraced housing previously on the site of The Commercial had been demolished, and the site was occupied by two public houses, The Albert to the north, and The Commercial to the south. Much later The Albert would be subsumed into The Commercial to create the current footprint of the site. To the rear (north-east) corner of the site, a hatched area can be seen indicating that there was a glazed courtyard to the rear of The Commercial.



## Appendix E: Historic Photograph



High Street, Cleator Moor: Undated early 20<sup>th</sup> century photograph.

Part of The Commercial Hotel can be seen to the left hand side of the image. Note that at this date the building appears to have natural sandstone exposed to the external walls, the white render visible today having been added later. Painted signage reading “COMMERCIAL HOTEL” is also visible between the ground and first floors, which has since been lost.

Photograph reproduced courtesy of Cumbria Archive Service, Whitehaven.

Appendix F: Site photographs



1. South elevation facing High Street.



2. West elevation facing North Street.

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3. West elevation of rear wing (formerly The Albert Public House) facing North Street.



4. East elevation of rear wing (formerly The Albert Public House) facing the rear courtyard.

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5. Oblique view of the site from the west, at the junction of High Street and North Street.



6. Oblique view of the site from the west, in context with neighbouring properties on High Street.

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7. Detail of rear external walls with local red St Bee's sandstone used throughout.



8. Detail of painted stone window surrounds, a typical vernacular building detail in the former county of Cumberland.



9. Detail of Dutch style corner gable and finial at the junction of High Street and North Street.



10. Detail of chimney to the gable end of 10 North Street with exposed brickwork indicating that the roof profile has been lowered.

All photographs taken by Williams Conservation Surveying Limited in August 2022.