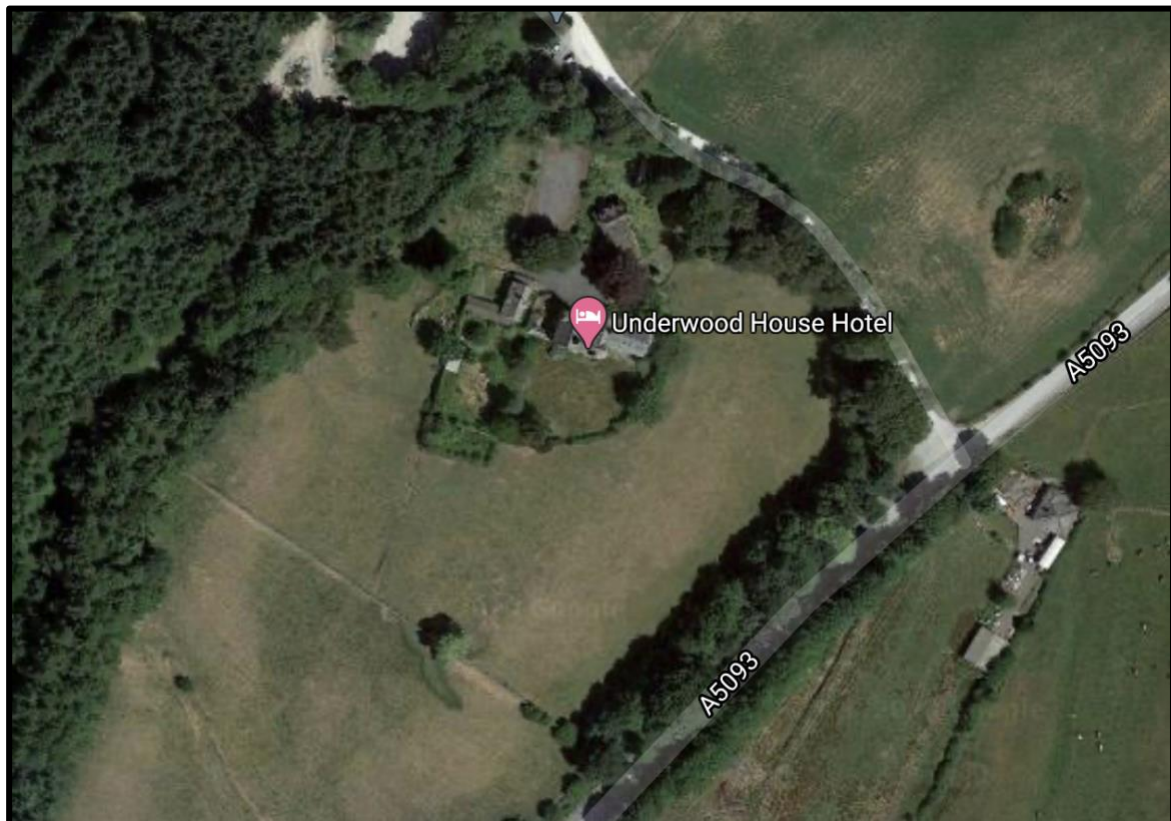


Planning Statement – Underwood House, The Hill, Millom

Proposal: Change of use of former Underwood House Hotel to a single dwelling house, change of use of Bower Cottage to associated residential accommodation and change of use of from Hotel Coach House to Office accommodation in association with Slacks Millom Ltd



Mr A Slack

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SRE Associates - Planning and Development Consultancy



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This planning statement has been prepared on behalf of the applicant in support of a planning application for a change of use at Underwood House, The Hill, Millom.
- 1.2 The application is a full application for a change of use of the former Hotel building, Bower Cottage and Coach House outbuilding all within the same site. The purpose of this statement is to set out the planning case in support of the development of the site, and it should be read in conjunction with the plans submitted and the application form.
- 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 planning policy context against which the application must be considered and undertakes a planning assessment of the proposed development and section 6 will draw together the conclusions.

2.0 The Site

- 2.1 The application related to a property known as Underwood House, The Hill, Millom. The application site adjoins the A5093 to the south, agricultural land to the west, to the north it adjoins the curtilage of the Ghyll Scaur Quarry, and to the east the application site adjoins the quarry access road.
- 2.2 The site consists of a large detached former Hotel, Coach House and outbuildings, and a detached property known as Bower Cottage. The topography of the land raises to the north and it is contained by mature hedgerows/trees to 3 sides and a stone wall to the western boundary.
- 2.3 The site is not in a Conservation Area and is not a Listed Building. Copeland Borough Council Tree Preservation Order No 46 is located on the site, covering a group of trees along the eastern and southern site boundaries, and 3 individual trees more central in the site. No trees will be impacted by the proposed changed of use.
- 2.4 The site is located in an area that the Environment Agency Flood Map for Planning has noted as Flood Zone 1, and as such have a low probability of flooding.

3.0 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The application is primarily for a change of use for the former Underwood House hotel to a single dwelling house.
- 3.2 The property is a 7-bedroom guest house but has been unused and empty for approximately 6 years since the closure of this use. The main Underwood House and pool area will be the applicant's home and be solely residential once renovations are complete. The proposed renovation works include fixing the roof which is currently leaking. The small outbuilding to the mostly north westly area of the site will be a workshop/storeroom and goat shed.

- 3.3 The application also seeks permission for the change of use of the Coach House building within the curtilage of Underwood House to an office for the applicant's business, Slacks Millom Ltd, which is a business based at a factory at Borwick Rails in Millom.
- 3.4 The coach house is currently in a poor state of repair, with a leaking roof causing water ingress into the building. There are two rooms on the ground level with a hall area with a w.c. Upstairs there are currently two bedrooms and a small bathroom. The applicant, Adam Slack, is the Managing Director of Slacks Millom Ltd, and his wife, Liesel Slack, is an office administrator at the business. Mrs Slack would predominantly be based at this office as her place of work rather than at Borwick Rails. Mr Slack would likely spend around 1 day of the week in total at the renovated office rather than at the main site. In addition, some of the factory accounting is currently undertaken at Mr & Mrs Slack's current home residence by a bookkeeper working approximately 1 day a week, who would also be sited at the Coach House if approved. Finally, the remaining space in the Coach House would be storage space for old files and financial record that are required to be kept for the business.
- 3.5 The application also seeks permission for the use of Bower cottage as additional residential accommodation. This was a 3-bedroom air B&B approximately 6 years ago and has been empty since. Currently upstairs are 3 bedrooms and one bathroom and to the ground floor there is an open plan kitchen, dining and living area. The applicant would intend to use this as a temporary home while working on the renovation of the main house, as it is in a more habitable state. Over winter they would likely live Monday to Thursday in their current home at The Green and then stay at weekends in the Bower House. In spring, this would be their main home once the weather is better and they would hope to live there 7 days a week when the work on site is nearing completion. Once the renovation of the main house is complete, this would be retained as an annex for visiting friends and family, and possibly for elderly parents in the future. It would all remain one property however, and the applicant does not intend to sell or let Bower Cottage separately, and cannot anyway due to the covenants included in the sale from the current owners.
- 3.6 The existing access to the property from the A5093 would not be amended with this development. There is sufficient parking in place on the site for the proposed change of use.
- 3.7 The property has been sold to the applicant with some agricultural land, primarily to the south and west of the main dwelling. It is the applicant's intention to use this as an agricultural small holding to breed goats and also keep sheep and horses. They will likely apply for planning permission in the future for an agricultural building adjacent to the existing building group to serve the land.

4.0 Planning history

- 4.1 The following applications are the previous applications on the site, and are considered relevant to the proposal:
- 4/89/1083/0 – Detached Garage Block and Snooker Room – Underwood, The Hill, Millom – Approved
 - 4/01/0850 – Fire Escape – Underwood, The Hill, Millom – Approved

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- 4/01/0231 – Change of use from residential dwelling to commercial Guesthouse – Underwood, The Hill, Millom – Approved
- 4/08/2584/0 – Change of use from commercial guesthouse to residential dwelling – Underwood, The Hill, Millom – Approved
- 4/16/2400/TPO – Works to seven trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order – Underwood, The Hill, Millom – Approved

5.0 Planning Policy and its application to the proposed development

5.1 Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Management Policies

5.2 **Policy DM15** is regarding conversion of rural buildings to residential use, and states as follows: -

'In rural areas proposals for the conversion of a building to residential use will be permitted so long as all of the following are fulfilled:

A Applicants can demonstrate that alternative employment or mixed use live-work accommodation or community use is not viable

B Where the subject building is currently or was last used for agriculture, applicants can also demonstrate that there is no alternative site or premises available in the locality within existing settlements

C The building is structurally sound and is capable of accepting conversion works without significant rebuilding, modifications or extensions

D The building in its existing form is of a traditional construction and appearance and the proposed conversion works conserve the essential character of the building and its surroundings. In this regard existing features of interest and external facing materials should as far as possible be retained

E The building is located within or adjacent to a village or existing group of buildings

F The building is served by a satisfactory access from the public highway network without the requirement for extensive private roads or tracks and domestic services such as water supply and electricity must be readily available to the site

G The conversion works incorporate reasonable standards of amenity

H The number of dwellings proposed is appropriate to the scale of adjoining development and will not substantially increase the number of dwellings in the countryside.'

5.3 While the above policy is likely aimed more at barn conversions that this particular proposal, this can be applied regardless. The employment use is not viable given the previous close of the Hotel use; It was not last used for agriculture; The building is structurally sound; The building is of traditional construction; The existing buildings themselves form a group; The

property has a satisfactory access; The conversion works required are minimal given the previous use and it is only for a conversion to a single dwelling.

5.4 In addition, it is noted that during the previous ownership, an application was made to Copeland BC for a change of use of the property back to a residential use in 2008, which was approved, but not commenced.

5.5 **Policy DM15B** is the Local Plan policy regarding Conversion of Rural Buildings to Commercial or Community Use. This states: -

‘Proposals to convert agricultural or other rural buildings to commercial or community use will be permitted subject to their fulfilling criteria B to G of Policy 15A.’

5.6 In terms of the above, the building was not last used for agriculture; is structurally sound; is of traditional construction; is within a group of buildings; has a satisfactory access; the proposed conversion will not impact the amenity of the adjacent residence.

5.7 The proposed Coach House use will actually have a positive impact upon the situation of the applicants, as they will be able to spend more time at home, and travel less to the factory site in Millom. Given the nature of the business however, the vast majority of the work and the staff will always be on the factory site and not at Underwood House. The office space is only a small but essential element of the business and is better suited at the home of the main users to reduce unnecessary travel.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The proposed development provides a suitable re-use to the currently vacant property Underwood House.

6.2 It is considered that there will be minimal impact from the proposed change of use to residential on any adjacent landowners outside of the site.

6.3 The proposed re-use of the Coach House as office space will enable the applicant to run their business more efficiently and sustainably.

6.4 The proposed use of Underwood House as a single residential dwelling has previously been approved by Copeland Borough Council.

6.5 It is contended therefore that the proposed development is acceptable and is in accordance with both national and local planning policy, and therefore should be approved.

Simon Blacker MRTPI