

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Change of use from ground floor retail and first floor residential (class e & c3) to form a short term let/ holiday cottage (class c3) and external alterations

Address: 70 Main Street, Egremont

Reference: 4/24/2202/0F1

Date: 09/07/24

Description: This building is a red sandstone mid terrace of two storeys. It appears to be roughly contemporary with the Market Hall and Town Hall (1880s)

Conclusion: Request further details (see bold)

Assessment:

I don't have any objection to the principle of this proposal, and am supportive of the aim to bring the building back into use. Since my first response, updates have been received:

- It is proposed to put timber sliding sashes at the front and make use of uPVC sliding sash and casement to the rear. I would view this as a good mitigation that would result in enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area, while bringing the building back into use.
 - I'd suggest obtaining several quotes for this work to ensure value.
 - **Details of replacement windows could either be agreed during the course of this application, or submitted and approved subsequently by discharging a condition. I would be happy with either.**
 - We do not stipulate colours, but advise following the guidance set out in the Conservation Area Design Guide available on our website. I'm happy to leave colours at your discretion, however I appreciate the concern about too many proving discordant. Modern windows tend to be brilliant white, although this is rather anachronistic, so off-white or something a little darker might be appropriate. If you view the house front as consisting of only two palettes (a greyscale palette for the windows, fascias and rain water goods) and a red palette (the masonry and the red/pink paint of the door) that might help. However, you could just as well make use of a single greyscale palette for the joinery and rain water goods, which might contrast well with the red sandstone. Being timber, if you try a colour and don't like it you can try a different one.
- The new front door indicated looks like it would fit the style of the building better. I'd suggest using black ironmongery to avoid too many colours.
- Steam cleaning and repointing the masonry sounds like an ideal way to improve its appearance and protect it.
- I think the suggestion to retain the current opening surrounds, infilled, is a good one as this shows off the story of the building better and adds to its richness.

In summary, I am supportive of this proposal. Details of the replacement windows are awaited.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area.”

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

NPPF para. 197 states that “In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation...”

NPPF para. 199 states, in the case of designated heritage assets, “great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”, irrespective of whether potential harm is substantial, less-than-substantial, or total loss. Where harm to a designated heritage asset is less-than-substantial, it should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 202).

Paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account when making decisions.

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 206)

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 207 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 201) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 202).

The former Copeland Borough Council’s Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- Local Plan Policy ST1C(ii) highlights the importance of protecting, enhancing and restoring the Borough’s cultural and heritage features and their settings.
- ST1D emphasises the council’s commitment to creating and retaining quality places.
- ENV4A stresses the importance of protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value.
- ENV4B outlines support for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring assets are put to appropriate, viable and sustainable uses.
- ENV4C aims to strengthen the distinctive character of settlements through high quality urban design and architecture that respect character and setting.
- DM13D outlines the need, in converting non-residential buildings within settlement limits, or in subdividing large residential buildings within settlement limits, for conversion works to conserve the character of the building.
- DM27A outlines support in principle for developments that “protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the borough’s historic sites and their settings”.
- DM27C outlines the restriction in principle of development within conservation areas to that which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

- DM27D highlights the necessity of avoiding disrespectful alterations, substantial demolition, adverse effects on setting or views, or changes of use that harm the conservation or economic viability of a listed building.

The Conservation Area Design Guide is a supplementary planning document adopted in 2017 that is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications within conservation areas in the legacy Copeland area. It is therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford

Conservation and Design Officer