

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Proposal: Installation of solar panels on rear roof of dwelling and on roof of detached barn; associated battery storage and cabling; and replacement of existing dwelling roof

Address: Fairladies, 102 Main Street, St Bees

Reference: 4/24/2277/OL1 and 2278/OF1

Date: 12/09/24

Description: Fairladies is a grade II listed house consisting of a smaller house and cottage joined together, and dating from at least the late 18th century, with potentially earlier origins.

Conclusion: No objection (condition suggested; see final point)

Assessment:

- Slate roofs need renewing/refreshing from time to time. Judging from the internal roof space photos, the house roof has been felted underneath, suggesting it was last replaced at some point in the later part of the 20th century.
- There will inevitably be some loss of slates due to the area taken up by solar panels, this being an in-roof system. The use of an in-roof system appears justified by the improved appearance and avoidance of the problem of maintaining the underside when compared with an on-roof system.
- There will be some harm through changing the appearance of the building and its barn. I would view this as less-than-substantial harm to the appearance of the building, and to its setting in the sense of the view from the house over the barn. I'd view this as being of a low level. The proposal consists of negligible impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- This harm is justified by the improvement to the building's offsite energy demand, and mitigated by the fact that the change will only be visible from a small area, mostly concealed from public view. Additionally, existing cables run routes will be used for new cabling.
- I note mention of a battery pack, although am not able to find details of where this will be installed among the application docs. I therefore suggest the use of a condition could provide for details to be submitted and approved prior to the installation of said pack.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a need "in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works [for the Local Planning Authority to] have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest" [Section 16(2)]. This requirement also applies to the granting of planning permission affecting a listing building or its setting [Section 66(1)].

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).

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.
- 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