

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Conversion of existing building to 4 no. residential units including room-in-the-roof extension with dormer windows to the eastern end of the building

Address: 3 Catherine Street, Whitehaven

Reference: 4/25/2176/0F1 and 4/25/2177/0L1

Date: 17/6/25

Description: 3 Catherine Street is a mainly two-storey building of conventional appearance for the area, which is considered listed by virtue of comprising a part of 80 Lowther Street, which was listed in 1949.

- Information on ownership and function on 1st Jan 1969 is not available, however, historic map data from 1961 reveals that the southern section of the building, with roughcast render, was part of 80 Lowther Street at that time, and therefore it can be inferred that it was in the same ownership and used for the same purpose at that time.
- It seems likely that this was the same arrangement at the introduction of curtilage legislation in 1969, and that main section of 3 Catherine Street described above should be considered to form part of the curtilage of 80 Lowther Street.

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- This building has an extant planning permission and listed building consent for conversion granted in 2021.
- The new application is for conversion to 4 no. units rather than 6.
- Externally, changes are mainly the addition of single doors and a window to the frontage, and the raising of the ridge of the single-storey section, with the addition of a dormer window front and back.
- The building is vacant and of fairly limited significance in and of itself. It makes a modest contribution to the significance of 80 Lowther Street, and the character and appearance of the conservation area, and settings of other nearby heritage assets more generally.
- I am supportive of the proposal to give this building a new use. Generally, the changes proposed will have a positive impact on the building's long-term viability and outcomes.
- There are some internal features of significance within the building, including mouldings, plasterwork and fireplaces. As the interior layout is different to the approved scheme, these should be documented in the heritage statement so that impact on them can be considered (if there is any impact), rather than left to assumption. Window and doors details are unaffected by the change to the scheme, so comment on these would not need to be added.

Summary:

- Heritage statement should be revised to note relevant internal features, and comment briefly on whether and if so how they will be impacted by the proposal.

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

NPPF para. 210 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. 212 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. 215).

Paragraph 216 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. 219)

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 220 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 213-14) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 215).

The Copeland area’s Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- BE1 provides for the preservation and enhancement of built heritage assets by:
 - Requiring a heritage impact assessment or heritage statement where the proposal would affect a heritage asset;
 - Giving great weight to the conservation of Copeland’s designated heritage assets when decision making;
 - Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to local character and history;
 - Supporting proposals for the appropriate reuse of vacant historic buildings, recognising that putting buildings into viable uses consistent with their conservation can help sustain and enhance their significance;
 - Supporting proposals that increase the enhancement, promotion and interpretation of Copeland’s architectural and archaeological resources;
 - Strengthening the distinctive character of Copeland’s settlements, through the application of high-quality design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the setting of heritage assets.
- BE2 states that development should preserve or enhance designated heritage assets (or important archaeological sites) and their settings. The more important the asset, the greater weight that will be given to its conservation. Proposals that better reveal the significance of

heritage assets will be supported in principle. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification.

- BE4 refers to non-designated heritage assets, saying that development should preserve or enhance such heritage assets and their settings. Proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets will be supported in principle. Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets or their settings should demonstrate that consideration has been given to their significance.
- DS4 outlines the Council's expectation that all new development will meet high-quality design standards that contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents.

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