

Client Details

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Project Details

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Rev. **E**

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For The

Conversion of the Oddfellows Arms

AT



**91/92 Main Street,
St. Bees
Cumbria CA27 0AD**

1.0 Introduction:

This statement has been prepared in order to support an application for Full Planning Consent submitted by Seaura Properties Ltd for the proposed Change of Use from a Public House to a Sui Generis Use Class at The Oddfellows Arms, 91/92 Main Street, St. Bees, Cumbria CA27 0AD. The application seeks a formal planning consent for the property to be used as a holiday let for guests on a short-term basis.

This statement forms part of a wider suite of documents that includes project drawings that detail the existing building layout and its appearance and how it will be altered to suit the premiss of this application.

2.0 Heritage Information Requirements:

The property although not Listed does fall within the designated Main Street Conservation area of St. Bees. The Main Street frontage and original building are believed to date from the 19th Century, however the combination of two and single storey pitched and flat roof additions to the rear are believed to be later 20th Century additions.

The last known use for the property was as a Public House, although it is not possible to confirm that this was the property's intended use at the date of its construction. The internal general arrangement plan at ground floor level would suggest that the property at some point in its history was possibly two or potentially three buildings that were subsequently combined to create the larger footprint for the public house. This is evidenced by the varying internal floor levels to both the ground and first floor layouts and the formation of openings believed to be within what were originally separating walls.

Site address
Oddfellows Arms – 91/92 Main Street, St. Bees, Cumbria CA27 0AD
Proposal
Proposed change of use from former public house to a Sui Generis use class to allow the property to be used for short-term holiday letting purposes, involving the demolition of the existing 20 th Century rear additions and the construction of a replacement two storey rear extension with alterations internally to both ground and first floor layouts.
<i>Reference to the originally proposed installation of a garden building to replace the existing shed structure has been removed.</i>

3.0 Heritage, Design and Access Statement

3.1 Heritage -

- 3.1.1 Significance** – The Oddfellows Arms is located in an established residential area of St. Bees, and is part of the southern cluster of the buildings that form the designated conservation area identified as Main Street. The property's last known use was as a Public House, however due to declining trade the business ceased to operate in May 2024, which coincided with the retirement of the then publican, who had run the business for around twenty years.

During the publican's term, the freeholders of the premises (Admiral Taverns) had in fact applied a number of rent reductions to support and assist the business as custom was declining, but despite this assistance from the freeholders the operation of the premises as a public house proved still not to be a viable option. On the 19th of April 2024 the freeholders instructed a national commercial agent (Everard Cole) specialising in the hospitality sector to market the property for sale, the asking price was set at £195,000 however, during the period the property was advertised the asking price was reduced on two occasions.

The commercial agents Everard Cole produced a marketing and viability report on the instructions of the applicant to evidence and support the position that the Oddfellows Arms was not a viable business and that there was no appetite during the marketing process for the premises to be used for this purpose. Refer to Appendices. The agents report also advises that none of the interested parties who looked to acquire the building were intending to retain the property as a public house, the general view being that the property would be subject to a change of use to a residential classification.

Furthermore, the agent has also advised that the freeholder did in fact also advertise to let the property as a public house so as to continue the business, but there were no interested parties for this option. This it was believed was due to the costs associated with making the property safe, legal and compliant which made the proposal unviable.

In summary despite the property's history in the village as a public house, its significance as such had declined to such an extent that as a business the use was not viable. And unfortunately, due to declining trade the property fell into disrepair and was non-compliant in terms of public safety etc; It's significance as a community asset therefore declined.

Whilst the Main Street elevation does contribute to the general appearance of the conservation area, there are no plans to alter this elevation or impact on the main street scene. However, any architectural or historical interest to the rear elevation of the property was lost when the property was extended, the proposal does require the demolition of the existing rear additions which have fallen into disrepair and for their replacement with modern extensions.

Arguably the decline of the Oddfellows Arms will have assisted in ensuring the viability of similar businesses to continue trading in the village, which has allowed those important community assets to be retained.

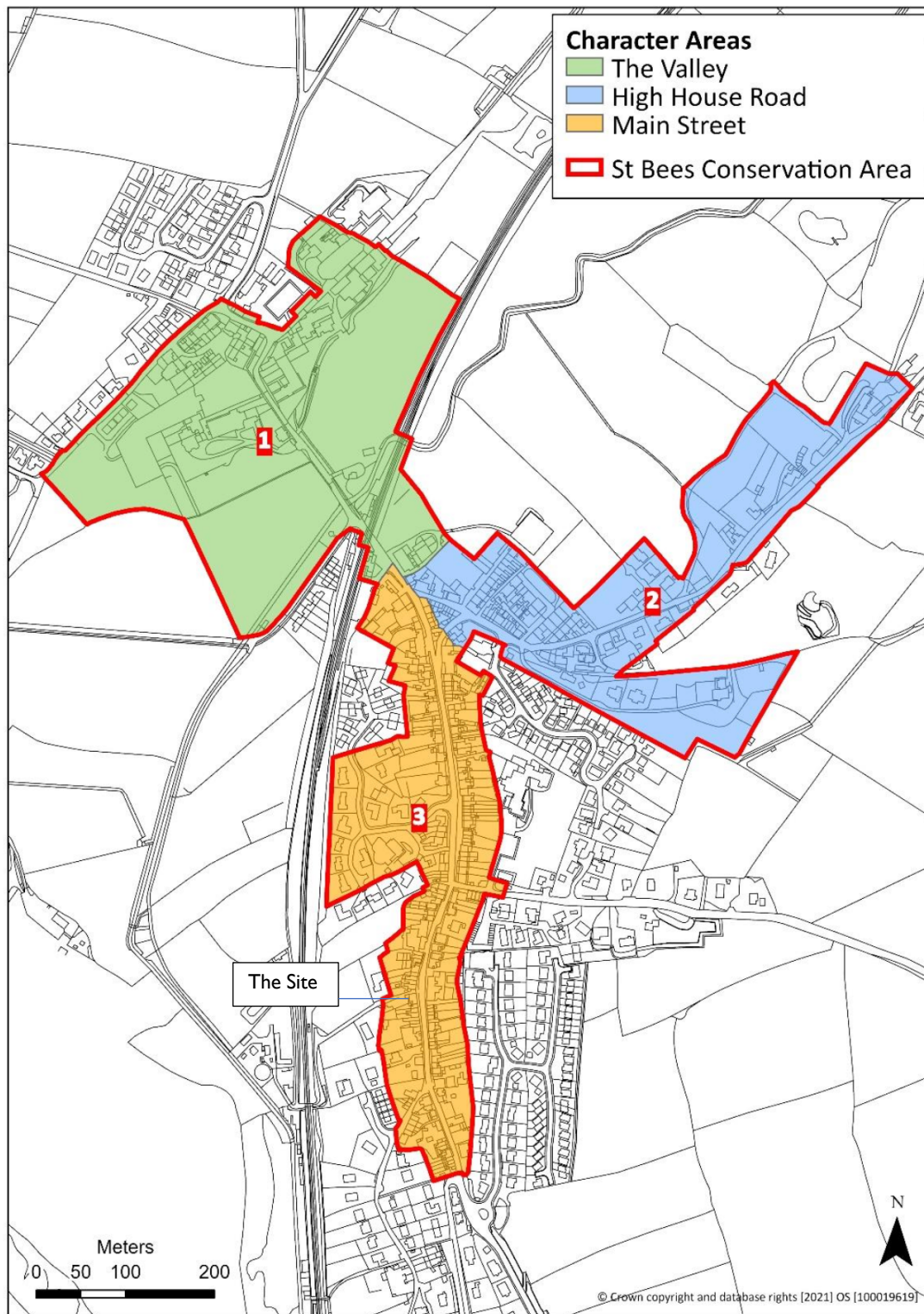


Figure 2 St Bees conservation area divided into three character areas: 1. The Valley; 2. High House Road; 3. Main Street

Image reproduced from the Copeland Council 2021 St. Bees Conservation Area Appraisal report.

- 4.1.2 **Impact** – It is not believed that the proposed change of use or extension of the property will have any detrimental impact on either the property or the conservation area in general.

There will be no planned changes to the front elevation of the building, other than any necessary repairs to render and redecoration. Where windows are to be replaced (which are currently provided as PVCu double glazed units in white frames) the replacement units will be of a similar 'mock' sash design.

To the rear of the property the current dilapidated rear extensions are to be taken down and replaced with a part single / part two storey extension.

- 4.1.3 **Mitigation** - The property has over a prolonged period fallen into a state of disrepair and suffers from issues such as:

- Rising damp
- High level water ingress
- Deterioration of the main roof structure
- Outdated electrical wiring and space heating provision

All of which will contribute to the long-term deterioration of the property if left unaddressed.

The proposed change of use and extension of the property will also include the renovation and refurbishment of the existing structure. Bringing the property back to a condition of being wind, safe and watertight.

4.2 **Design** –

- 4.2.1 The Oddfellows Arms fronts Main Street and is a two-storey traditional proportioned structure with a dual pitched gable ended roof structure. The external walls have a painted rough cast render finish and incorporate a series of traditional proportioned (sash) window openings with rendered band surrounds, the pedestrian entrance to the former public house is also on the Main Street elevation. The roof has a plain concrete tile roof covering which at some point will have replaced the original natural slate roof covering. There are two projecting chimney structures that rise above the ridge line of the roof.

To the rear elevation the extensions incorporate flat roof structures with a bitumen based felt roof finish.

There are no planned changes to the front elevation other than repair and maintenance works, which will include external decorations and the renewal of defective materials / finishes on a like for like basis.

To the rear elevation the existing extensions are to be demolished, and a new part single / part two storey extension constructed in their place, incorporating materials to match – painted render, PVCu joinery and a modern flat roof membrane system.

The proposal does however call for the reconfiguration of the internal ground and first floor layouts to create a series of bedrooms for holiday letting purposes, with kitchen and dining facilities housed within the replacement rear extension.



Image – Proposed ground and first floor plans with elevations & indicative sections. *Updated image with amended proposal April 2026 (Rev.F).*

4.3 Site Characteristics and Constraints –

The key characteristic of the site is its central village location with panoramic views across the coast at the rear of the property. The site itself is relatively flat and to the rear incorporates a small off-street parking area which formerly would have provided an element of customer parking for the public house. The property adjoins the neighbouring building to the southern end of the structure.

It is envisaged that the replacement rear extension will have little or no impact on the property and that the car parking area at the rear will be tidied up and formalised as part of the conversion project.

4.4 Access –

Access to the rear parking area is over an established single width access road, which will have formerly served the public house during its many years of trading.

Access to the site will remain the same as currently exists, with no planned changes or alteration to the route taken to enter or exit the site by vehicle.

Pedestrian access to the property is gained from all three exposed elevations – front, side and rear. This will continue to be the case for both the side and rear elevations, however the existing front access although in its appearance will be retained, it will in fact only be used as an exit point in the event of an emergency.

4.5 Design Proposals –

Amount –

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing rear extensions to the former public house and for the construction of a replacement rear extension, as well as for the repair, renovation and conversion of the property to provide multiple short term holiday letting rooms (8No.) with associated kitchen and dining facilities.

Layout –

The proposed internal alterations within the existing property have been designed so as wherever possible to minimise altering the existing structure, where additional partitions are required, these will be formed in compliance with the building regulations. All of which will deliver 8No. letting rooms for holiday purposes, with associated kitchen and dining facilities.

The proposed alterations to the internal layout will have no effect on the principle Main Street elevation.

Scale –

Whilst it is acknowledged that the replacement rear extension is larger at ground floor level and similar in size at first floor level when compared to the existing additions which are to be demolished. It is not believed that the proposed new extensions are disproportionate to those already in existence and for which it is assumed planning permission would have been sought.

Landscaping –

The site as exists is a former commercial public house with vehicle parking for patrons to the rear, with very little in the way of landscaping or formal planting.

The proposal will incorporate the resurfacing of the existing vehicle parking area and the introduction of a small amount of screen planting.

It is envisaged that any further planting to soften the appearance of the rear area will be by way of pots and planters that require a minimal amount of maintenance.

The proposal does not involve the loss of planted areas or potential habitat.

Appearance –

This Heritage, Design and Access Statement has been prepared to accompany an application for full planning consent for the change of use of the former Oddfellows Arms. Documentation and details pertaining to the design and appearance of the alterations necessary to deliver this project are included on the project drawing.

5.0 Access

Specific pedestrian and vehicular access to the property has been identified elsewhere in this document. The differing internal levels within the property have also been mentioned previously in this document. The provision of 3No. large guest bedrooms with en suite facilities and the positioning of the guest kitchen and dining facilities all at ground floor level will allow less ambulant guests to still enjoy the facilities on offer.

In more general terms, the site is relatively well placed in terms of public transport links, providing access to areas further a-field, such as the historic port town of Whitehaven and to those undertaking the Wainwright coast to coast route.

6.0 Policy

There has been an informal conversation with a planning officer, Christopher Harrison, who advised that in principle the proposal for a change of use would be acceptable to the local planning authority. However, it would be necessary to evidence that the former use of the property as a public house had been properly afforded the opportunity to continue by way of robust marketing evidence, as the loss of a community asset is not taken lightly.

7.0 Consultation

As mentioned in 6.0, whilst no formal discussions have been held with Cumberland Council, a telephone discussion has taken place in early October 2025 with Christopher Harrison regarding this specific property and the proposed change of use.

8.0 Conclusion

This application is for a planning consent for the proposed change of use for the former Oddfellows Public House to a Sui Generis use to allow the property to be used for short term holiday letting purposes, which will involve the demolition of deteriorating and defective existing rear additions and for the construction of a replacement rear extension, as well as the internal alteration and refurbishment of the property to improve the overall condition of the fabric of the building.

The proposal will have no detrimental impact on the surrounding buildings or the conservation area in general. It will in fact bring a disused and neglected building back into use and contribute to the economy of the local community.