Surface Water Drainage Assessment

Planning Application Ref: FUL/2025/0116
Proposal: Change of Use of Former Microbrewery to Residential Dwelling with Associated External Works
Applicant: Ian Hunter
Site: Land adjacent to Bowness House Farm, Bowness-on-Solway, CA7 5AF

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1. Introduction

This Surface Water Drainage Assessment has been prepared to support the planning application for the change of use of a former microbrewery building to a single residential dwelling at land adjacent to Bowness House Farm, Bowness-on-Solway, Cumbria.

The assessment has been prepared in accordance with UK planning policy and guidance, including:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) relating to flood risk and drainage;
- Building Regulations Part H;
- The Non-Statutory Technical Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS);
- The Drainage Hierarchy (as set out in both the PPG and Building Regulations).

The purpose of this report is to confirm the approach to surface water drainage, demonstrate compliance with national and local requirements, and to explain the site-specific constraints which have influenced the drainage strategy.

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2. Surface Water Drainage Policy Context

In line with Building Regulations Part H, all new developments are required to consider surface water drainage using the following hierarchy of preference:

1. Discharge to a soakaway or infiltration system;
2. Discharge to a watercourse;
3. Discharge to a surface water sewer;
4. Discharge to a combined sewer (surface and foul).

Developments should aim to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage surface water as close to its source as possible. Additionally, developments must not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and should, where practicable, result in betterment.

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is the statutory consultee for surface water drainage, and schemes must demonstrate compliance with both the national drainage hierarchy and any local policies relating to runoff rates, attenuation, and water quality.

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3. Site Description and Background

The application site lies within the boundary of the UNESCO World Heritage Site: Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall). While the building itself is not situated on a scheduled monument, it lies in an area of high archaeological sensitivity, in close proximity to the scheduled Maia Roman Fort and other subsurface remains of national significance.

The structure subject to this application was previously approved under FUL/2022/0111, which included the demolition of an existing barn, erection of a microbrewery building, and a suite of related infrastructure works, including foul and surface water drainage. That application was subject to stringent archaeological conditions due to the potential for disturbance to below-ground heritage assets.

As part of the earlier approved scheme:

- Drainage connections were already installed and operational;
- All new services, including surface and foul drainage, were routed through a pre-existing combined sewer on site;
- Minimal excavation was undertaken to comply with archaeological protection protocols;
- The entire drainage strategy was designed and implemented with the express aim of avoiding further ground disturbance.

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4. Proposed Development and Impact on Surface Water

This application proposes no physical alterations to the building envelope, no extensions, and no new hardstanding or impermeable surfaces that would affect the existing drainage regime. The proposed works are limited to internal alterations and change of use.

The following key facts apply:

- The existing drainage connections remain unchanged;
- No new major excavation for services or drainage is required;
- The building has already been connected to the existing combined public sewer in accordance with approved application FUL/2022/0111;
- Surface water from roofs and hardstandings already drains to this network via controlled discharge, designed with respect to the site's heritage constraints.

Consequently, there is no additional surface water runoff generated by this proposal. The current arrangement, already approved and constructed, remains wholly adequate for the proposed residential use.

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5. Justification for Use of Combined Sewer

While best practice typically discourages the use of combined sewers for surface water drainage, this site is an exception due to archaeological sensitivity.

The following justification applies:

- Extensive consultation with the Local Planning Authority and Historic England during the previous application established that disturbance of the subsurface through new trenching must be avoided;
- Alternative drainage options (e.g. soakaways or discharge to a watercourse) were considered but ruled out due to the requirement to prevent excavation into undisturbed archaeological layers;
- The solution adopted – connection to an existing combined sewer that traverses the site – was the only feasible option that aligned with both drainage requirements and heritage preservation;
- This position was reflected in detailed archaeological mitigation plans.

Given that the drainage infrastructure has already been implemented, and no additional surface water flows are introduced, the current strategy remains the most appropriate and least intrusive approach.

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6. Summary and Conclusion

This Surface Water Drainage Assessment confirms that:

- The existing building is already connected to the public combined sewer, including for surface water, via approved infrastructure constructed under application FUL/2022/0111;
- No changes to surface water drainage infrastructure are proposed or required;
- The site lies in a highly sensitive archaeological area, where standard drainage hierarchy solutions were not viable due to the requirement to avoid excavation;
- The chosen drainage strategy was based on a site-specific heritage-led approach, previously approved by the Local Planning Authority and Historic England;
- The proposal results in no increase in impermeable area or runoff;
- The development complies with national policy objectives by avoiding increased flood risk, protecting heritage assets, and using existing infrastructure appropriately.

On this basis, it is concluded that no further surface water drainage works are necessary, and the existing arrangement is entirely suitable for the proposed change of use.