



Heritage Statement

**Change of Use: Millom Library, St. George's Road,
Millom, LA18 4DD**

May 2022

Contents

1. Introduction..... 1

2. Legislative & Policy Context 2

3. Site History & Development..... 7

4. Assessment of Impact on Significance 15

5. Conclusion 17

Prepared By: Chris Johnson MRTPI
Status: Final
Date: May 2022

For and on behalf of Avison Young Planning and Regeneration Limited

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Avison Young on behalf of the applicant NDA Properties Ltd to assist Copeland Borough Council as local planning authority ('the Council') in its consideration of the accompanying full planning application for the change of use of the site and premises from a library at ground floor and council meeting rooms/offices on the first floor to an office hub with ancillary meeting rooms and car parking at Millom Library, St. George's Road, Millom, LA18 4DD.
- 1.2 It is understood the Council currently own the premises and the building was last used for Council offices and the town's library. The current building has seen little maintenance and investment in recent years and is in a poor state of repair.
- 1.3 A pre-application was submitted to the Council in November and response issued in December 2021 (reference: PAA/21/0086) broadly supporting the proposals. Christie Burns (Planning Officer, Development Management) was the case officer for this enquiry. The comments provided in this response have been taken into consideration in developing the proposals for the site, and the supporting evidence suggested as validation requirements have been submitted with this application.
- 1.4 The site is within Millom Town Centre and Millom Conservation Area. This Heritage Statement explores the history of the site and property, its contribution to the character and significance of the Conservation Area and the impact of the proposed development on the Conservation Area.

2. Legislative & Policy Context

- 2.1 Conservation Areas are afforded statutory protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Paragraph 72 (1) of the Act states that:

'...with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.'

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.2 Paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by development proposals, including any contribution made by their setting. In determining applications, LPAs should take account of (para 197):
- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets...
 - b) The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities...
 - c) The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 2.3 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (para 199). The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.

Planning Practice Guidance – Conserving & Enhancing the Historic Environment

- 2.4 Paragraph 007 states that heritage assets may be affected by direct physical change or by change in their setting. Being able to properly assess the nature, extent and importance of the significance of a heritage asset, and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals.
- 2.5 Paragraph 009 states that applicants are expected to describe in their application the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. In doing so, applicants should include analysis of the significance of the asset and its setting, and, where relevant, how this has informed the development of the proposals. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance.

- 2.6 Paragraph 018 states that 'what matters in assessing if a proposal causes substantial harm is the impact on the significance of the heritage asset. As the National Planning Policy Framework makes clear, significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting'.

Millom Conservation Area Appraisal (2021)

- 2.7 Millom was designated a Conservation Area in 2003. The latest Conservation Area Appraisal was produced in April 2021. A Conservation Area Appraisal is a tool that explores and defines what is special about the area's architecture and history, and therefore worth preserving or enhancing:

A good appraisal will consider what features make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the conservation area, thereby identifying opportunities for beneficial change or the need for planning protection.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Paragraph: 025 Reference ID: 18a-025-20190723

- 2.8 The Millom Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared following a detailed assessment of Millom using Historic England's 2016 advice document on conservation area character appraisals. It contains appendices mapping building quality and landscape analysis, which should be viewed in conjunction with the descriptive sections.
- 2.9 The Appraisal highlights a number of issues affecting the Conservation Area, including:
- Millom has experienced a prolonged period of difficulty both in maintaining its buildings and giving them long-term viable uses.
 - There has been widespread loss of historic detailing, particularly relating to windows and doors, which has greatly affected residential properties, though commercial properties have suffered too.
 - Additional problems relate to loss of slate roofs (replacement with tile, often with unsightly plastic verge caps), covering over of facades with pebble dashing, addition of satellite dishes, loss of window mullions and loss of historic shop fronts.
 - Several of Millom's most attractive and high-status buildings are vacant at the time of writing.
- 2.10 Millom is described as a small former Victorian industrial town of approximately eight thousand people, located near the Duddon Estuary. It experienced a period of rapid growth following development of large-scale iron-ore mining and iron working activities in the area. It is situated approximately six miles (10km) north-north-west of Barrow-in-Furness and twenty-six miles (40km) south-south-east of Whitehaven. It is two miles (3.5km) south-east of the Lake District National Park border.

- 2.11 The centre is characterised by predominantly two-storey terraces in a mixture of red brick, roughcast render, pebble-dash, and watershot slate with red sandstone dressings. Roofs are a mixture of slate and tile. The conservation area is surrounded by areas of two-storey detached and semi-detached post-war housing on its west and south sides, and the regimented late Victorian streets of the New Town on its east. The town's roofscape is relieved from certain angles by the spire of St George's Church but is otherwise quite uniformly low.
- 2.12 The landscape in which Millom sits consists of a belt of gently undulating agricultural land between the shore of the estuary, where industry was formerly concentrated and has now partially been taken over by tourism and business park activities, and rising, more jagged land towards Black Combe and the Lake District to the north and north-west.
- 2.13 Millom's conservation area is at the town's centre and takes the form of several core zones in close proximity with streets and avenues radiating off them. This is indicative of the nature of Millom as a place that grew from its connection to the railway line: the station sits at the heart of the conservation area; the railway bisects it. The conservation area expresses a certain symmetry about the north-east to south-west line of the railway, with the bridge over it and two zones of relatively low-density open ground to either side forming a heart that is composed of distinct halves, with the Station Road area on the north side, its war memorial and the approach to the station, having a different feel from the Lancashire Road side to the south, which is characterised by a Tesco supermarket and its car park occupying the site of former railway buildings.
- 2.14 Progressing into the "south" half, the Market Square, a late 19th and early 20th century collection of civic buildings asserts itself as a consciously styled and scaled node, an attempt to create a centre for the town. At the juncture between this area and the south end of the bridge is a gateway formed by the projecting end of the former West County Hotel (now flats) and the entrance to St George's Church precinct.
- 2.15 The entrance and view into the precinct, combined with the entrance and view of Market Square, and the view back along St George's Road over the railway bridge, make this junction a characterful and important component of Millom's conservation area in expressing three key components of its formation: religion (and "enlightenment" more generally; in this sense the church has as much to do with the library as it does the town hall), civic integrity and industrial progress.
- 2.16 The south side of the conservation area also takes in an area of the residential terraces along Lapstone Road and Wellington Street, which characterise much of Millom new town.

- 2.17 To the north side of the railway line, the conservation area takes in Station Road extending up to the Station Hotel and down to include an area of space at the war memorial green. The principal node on the northern side is located at the First World War memorial, which connects to the north by a short row of terraced housing on one side of Cambridge Street to Holborn Hill, the historical origin of Millom, from which expansion has generally progressed in a southern and eastern direction.
- 2.18 Much of the fabric of Millom's town centre dates from a relatively narrow window of time between the 1860s and 1900s. Since then, the main changes to Millom's built area, aside from the loss of the iron-related industrial sites in the 1960s-70s, have been the creation of areas of housing on the edges of the Victorian settlement.

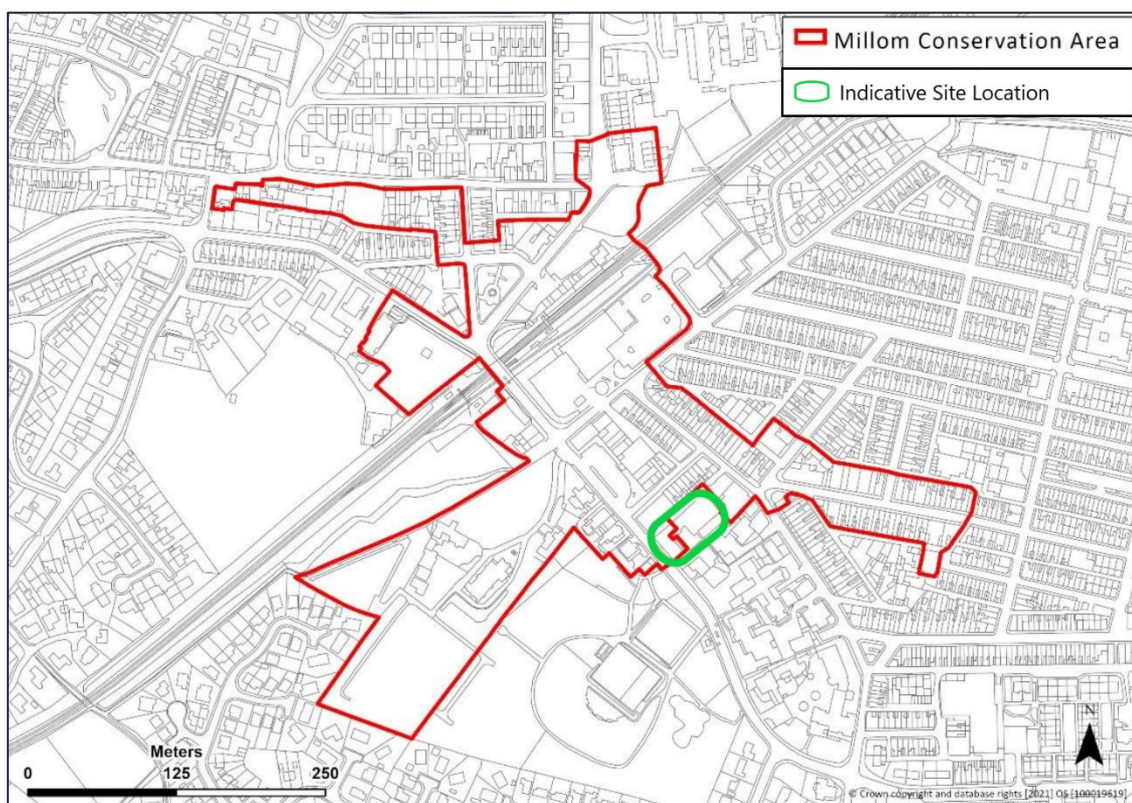


Figure 1: The Conservation Area within Millom (Millom Conservation Area Appraisal 2021)

Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028

- 2.1 The adopted Copeland Local Plan covers the area of Copeland outside of the Lake District National Park. The Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (adopted 5 December 2013) forms the main part of the Development Plan for the borough. This contains planning policies (strategic and development management Policies), land allocations and areas of protection that will guide future development in the borough and assist with making planning decisions.
- 4.32 **Policy ENV4 Heritage Assets** seeks to maximise the value of the Borough's heritage assets by:
- A. Protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other townscape and rural features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value;

- B. Supporting proposals for heritage led regeneration, ensuring that any listed buildings or other heritage assets are put to an appropriate, viable and sustainable use;
- C. Strengthening the distinctive character of the Borough's settlements, through the application of high-quality urban design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the settings of listed buildings

- 4.33 **Policy DM27 Built Heritage and Archaeology** supports the above policy, setting out the Council's approach to development which affects built heritage and archaeology. The Council will support development proposals which protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the Borough's historic sites and their settings will be supported.
- 4.34 Development within Conservation Areas will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area and, where appropriate, views in and out of the area. The Council will pay particular attention to how new development respects the character of existing architecture and any historical associations, landscape features, open spaces, trees, walls and quality of townscape.

3. Site History & Development

History of the Site

- 3.1 The application relates to Millom Library, St. George's Road, Millom, LA18 4DD. Millom Library is located within the designated town centre of Millom. The site area measures circa 0.145ha and comprises the library building and car park to the rear of the building.
- 3.2 The building was built as a library, but in 1995 application reference 4/95/0610/0 granted permission for 'alterations to form new local government centre'. The building was last used for Council offices and the town's library. The current building has seen little maintenance and investment in recent years and is in a poor state of repair. It is understood that the Council currently own the building and the applicant will purchase the building upon grant of planning permission for the desired use.
- 3.3 The surrounding area comprises primarily town centre uses, including a restaurant use to the immediate northwest of the site and property management professional services company to the southeast. In the wider area are more food and beverage use, banks and professional services and retail uses. The built form appears to be primarily converted residential buildings in origin. The scale is limited to mostly two storeys. There is a purpose-built hospital to the south of the site and Millom Park and Cricket Club opposite the site which provide large areas of green space.

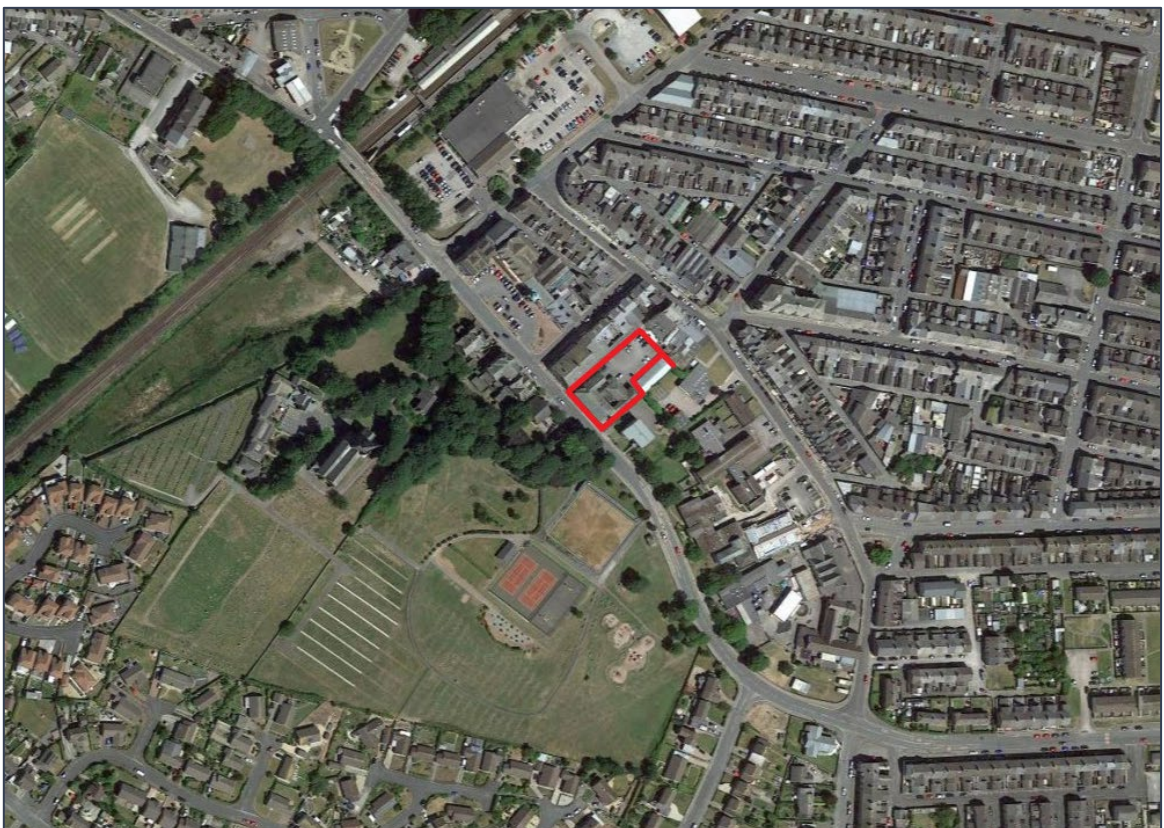


Figure 2: Site Location (indicative location in red)

History of the Development of Millom

- 3.4 Millom's founding occurred in 1866, and prior to this the settlement was called Holborn Hill, a name that now refers to a street only. Holborn Hill was issued a market charter in 1251 by Henry II, so the first origins of the village clearly predate this somewhat.
- 3.5 Access to Holborn Hill was by packhorse across the Duddon Estuary. Packhorse routes stopped at the Punch Bowl Inn at the Green and at the Ship Inn on Holborn Hill, which was the village's oldest coaching inn and is currently a private dwelling situated outside the conservation area.
- 3.6 Prior to the initial formation of Millom, Holborn Hill had a population of around 160 people. The village was in a linear form of two rows of farmsteads arrayed either side of the street, which runs in an east-west orientation. This street is still identifiable in the urban layout.
- 3.7 Despite proximity to the sea, in the early 1860s few of the locals drew their main employment from fishing-related activities. At that time, though relatively small in scale, mining was the second largest occupation after agriculture, and small-scale mining and smelting activities had been carrying on for a long period of time. Mining of pyrite was carried out mostly around The Hill in Millom Above township, although iron ore was found here in 1848, preceding the great expansion mining was to experience in the Millom Below township.
- 3.8 The area was initially within the control of the Lords of Millom, seated at Millom Castle to the north of the present town. This passed from the de Boyville family to the de Huddleston family in the 13th century, who held it for more than five hundred years before it was sold to Sir James Lowther in 1748. Millom Castle, ruined portions of which remain and are scheduled and listed grade I, incorporate a 16th or 17th century farmhouse. This is also listed by Historic England on the national Heritage at Risk Register. Adjacent to it is the grade I listed Holy Trinity Church, which has 12th century origins. Visiting the castle in 1815, author and playwright Richard Ayton wrote, "It is surrounded by an extensive park... once covered with a grove of huge oaks, and well stocked with deer, but now a naked waste. The whole domain was stripped of its woods by one of the Huddlestons, for the sake of opening some mines of iron-ore, and building a large vessel, both of which projects proved abortive..."
- 3.9 It is fascinating to imagine the landowner embarking on such a destructive and fruitless campaign in pursuit of iron-ore at least a century prior to the arising of Millom as a mining town proper.
- 3.10 The Whitehaven and Furness Junction Railway arrived at Holborn Hill in 1851 and contributed to the development of Hodbarrow iron ore mine, which was established in 1855 and connected to the railway in 1864. It became the Furness Railway in 1866.

- 3.11 The mine was joined by an iron works in 1865 at Borwick Rails, and this began a period of rapid growth, with many people arriving for work, notably from Cornwall. Hodbarrow became Cumberland's most productive haematite mine, accounting for 60% of the county's output by 1901, but difficulties with inundation and subsidence of the works were persistent.
- 3.12 Owing to what swiftly became a housing crisis, the New Town was developed in the region between Holborn Hill, the mine and the iron works, on poorly drained land that formed the Rottingdon Estate owned by the Lowther family. The New Town was laid out by Wadham and Turner, engineers of Barrow, and named Millom for its connection with the new Millom iron works. Reflecting this, its main streets are arranged parallel in east-west lines pointing towards the works.
- 3.13 During the 1870s, the arrangement of Millom shifted following the creation of the bridge on St George's Road, replacing an earlier crossing further north, and the Paley and Austin St George's church, which was completed in 1877 on land donated by Lord Lonsdale. A new town square was constructed, shifting the town's centre from Lonsdale Road, Market Street and the former market site, now occupied by St James' Primary School. The railway station, by the same architects, dates also from the mid-1870s.
- 3.14 The town hall with its clocktower was constructed in the square in 1879, although the tower was later reduced in height in the 1950s for structural reasons. The square was also the location of a market, although is no longer held.

Site Planning History

- 3.15 A pre-application was submitted to the Council in November and response issued in December 2021 (reference: PAA/21/0086) broadly supporting the proposals. Christie Burns (Planning Officer, Development Management) was the case officer for this enquiry. The comments provided in this response have been taken into consideration in developing the proposals for the site, and the supporting evidence suggested as validation requirements have been submitted with this application.
- 3.16 The building was built as a library, but in 1995 application reference 4/95/0610/0 granted permission for 'alterations to form new local government centre'. The building was last used for Council offices and the town's library. The current building has seen little maintenance and investment in recent years and is in a poor state of repair.



Figure 3: Cumberland Series 1861 (six inch to mile), showing the first railway line and Holborn Hill as a series of buildings arranged linearly along the pack horse route that comes up from the Duddon

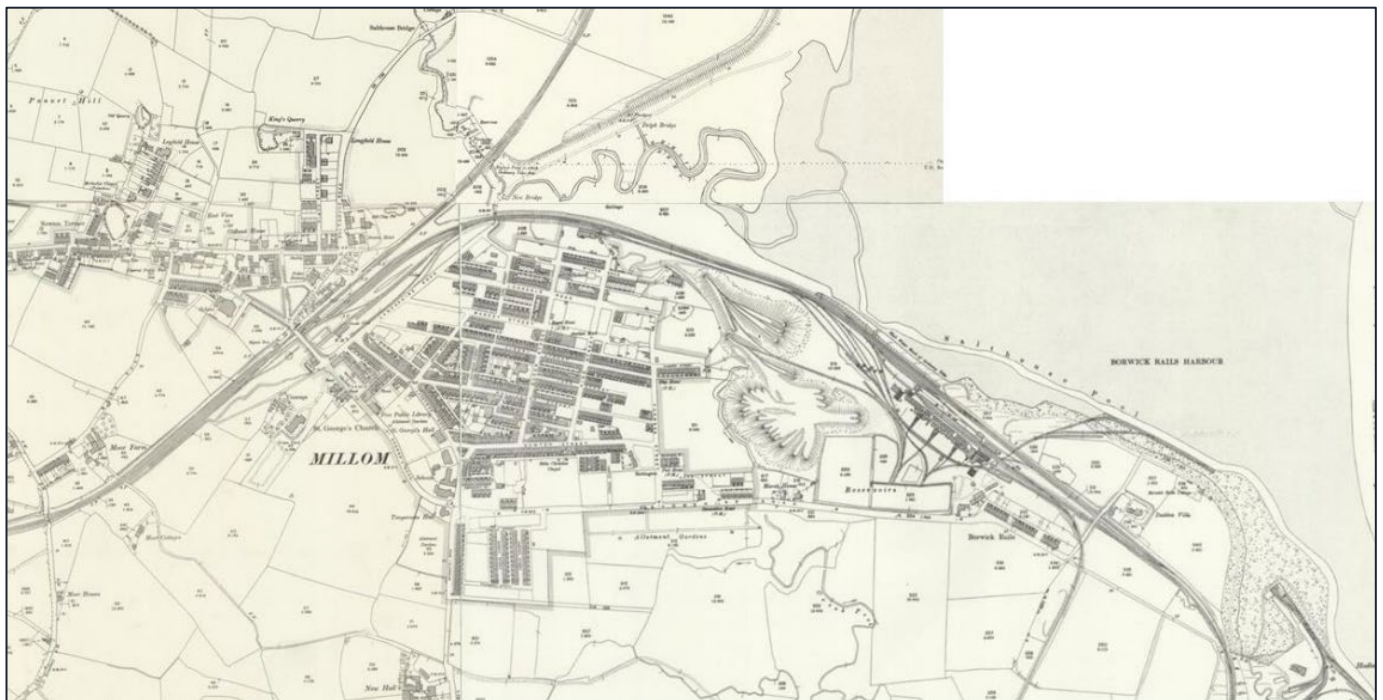


Figure 4: Cumberland Series 1897 (Twenty-five inch to mile), showing iron works to east of town. The extent of development that had taken place in the preceding 30-40 years is evident.



Figure 5: Cumberland Series, 1921 (Twenty-five inch to mile), showing iron works to east and iron-ore mine to south. Relatively little development has occurred since the start of the 20th century compared with in previous decades.

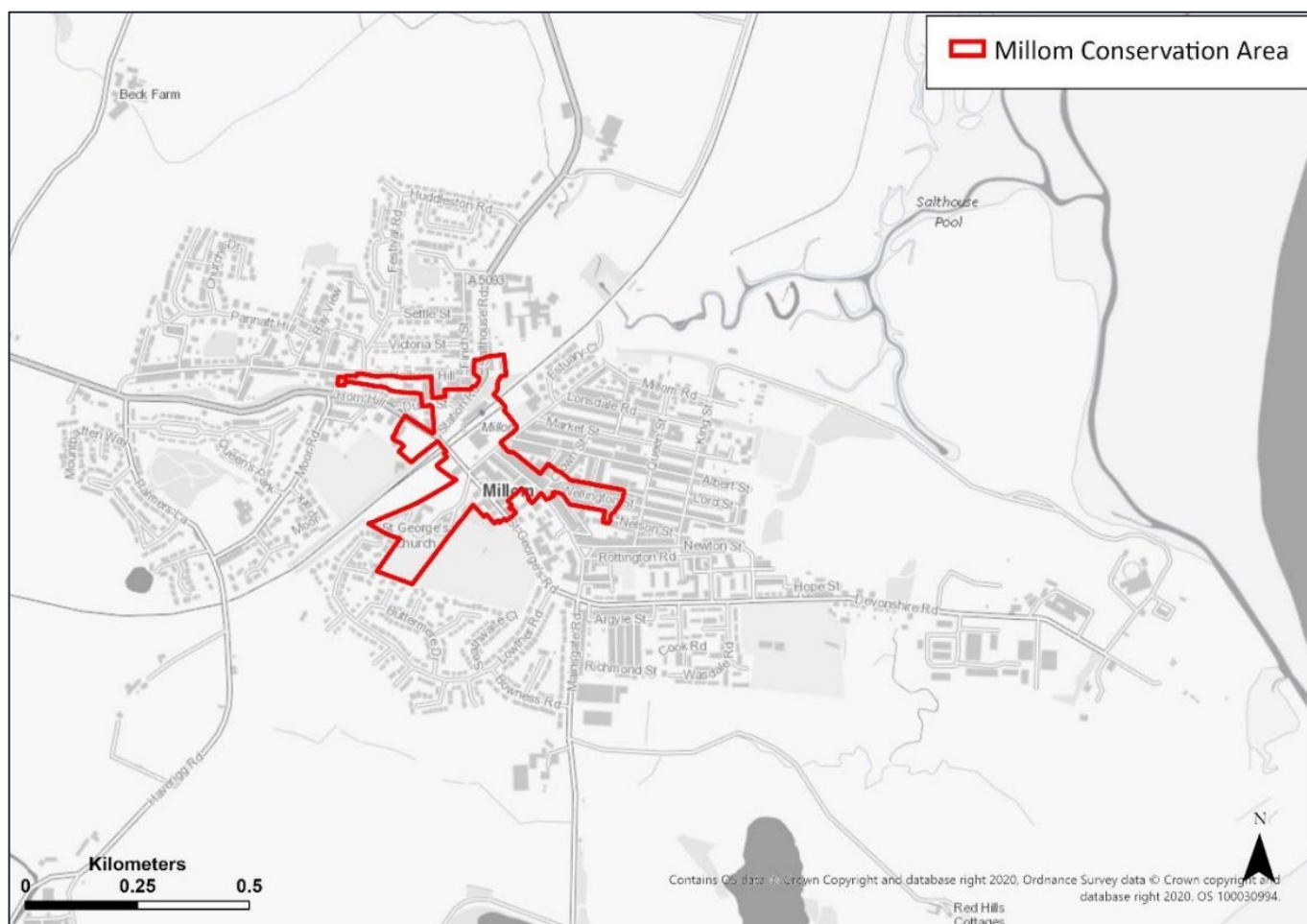


Figure 6: Contemporary map of Millom. Industrial functions have been removed almost wholesale, and residential developments have extended the western half of town.

Character of Millom

- 3.17 Millom contains a range of buildings that form a highly complete, albeit largely neglected, expression of mid- to late-Victorian town planning. The townscape has been relatively undisturbed by site clearance or the introduction of unfamiliar interventions, and dates for the most part to a relatively narrow timeframe between the 1860s and 1900s.
- 3.18 Plots for building were sold off to developers in parcels, resulting in the development of groups of buildings that are similar to one another but differ from those nearby in construction and detailing.
- 3.19 For the most part, it is of good although not exceptional architectural quality, though the New Town area contains a density of two-storey terraced housing interspersed with more ornate civic and religious buildings that has the potential to be very impressive. Cambridge Street is also a notable terrace in a completely different style from the buildings on the south side of the railway. Like every part of the conservation area, New Town suffers from chronic under-maintenance and widespread unsympathetic alteration.
- 3.20 The station of 1872 is an attractive example by well-known Lancaster firm Paley and Austin, although it is modest in appearance, being low and set slightly below the height of Station Road. The bridge on St George's Road over the railway is similarly modest in appearance, although forms a pleasing composition with the station. The cluster of buildings around Market Square has some stature, although suffers in places from unsympathetic alterations and dilapidation.
- 3.21 Millom is built from, indeed characterised by, a varied palette of slate, red sandstone, red brick, render and some granite and limestone in varying combinations. Walls around Holborn Hill bear evidence of a vibrant mix of materials that is engaging and characterful, with slate and alternating mixtures of slate and granite cobbles on show.
- 3.22 New Town contains some handsome civic buildings with walls of watershot slate (whereby the material is tilted slightly downwards to throw off rainwater) in either slabs or blocks, with dressings of red sandstone around windows and doors. Certain of the houses here too are watershot slate, with others having rubble walls under a rendered finish.
- 3.23 The area around the war memorial green and up Cambridge Street is notable for having buildings of red brick. Those on Holborn Hill are mostly rendered and are likely to be in a range of materials underneath. Where the buildings of Millom were originally rendered, this was likely to have been a roughcast, probably thrown onto the wall, or a smoother ashlar type were used on higher status buildings. Many of Millom's buildings today feature a pebble-dashed finish.
- 3.24 Roofs are traditionally slate, but many have been replaced with tile. Windows and doors have almost all been replaced with plastic units in place of the timber they would originally have had.

- 3.25 Millom conservation area contains large areas of terraced housing in its New Town, which is complemented by civic and religious buildings typical of Victorian town planning, some of which are now vacant. The station occupies the central part of the conservation area and also contains museum and café uses, although the profusion of railway lines that formerly comprised the goods yard on the south side has been lost and is now a mixture of car parking and commercial uses. The part of the conservation area on the north side of the railway consists of mostly residential uses around and radiating from the war memorial green, with some commercial properties.

Character Areas

- 3.26 Millom's conservation area contains sub-areas adjacent to one another that have distinct characters. Millom was largely created in zones from greenfield sites and has not been redeveloped since to any great extent, so these areas are still easily distinguishable. This appraisal presents them in turn to allow a more detailed description of their character and appearance. These subsections should be viewed as descriptive elements for the conservation area as a whole; they are not separate conservation areas

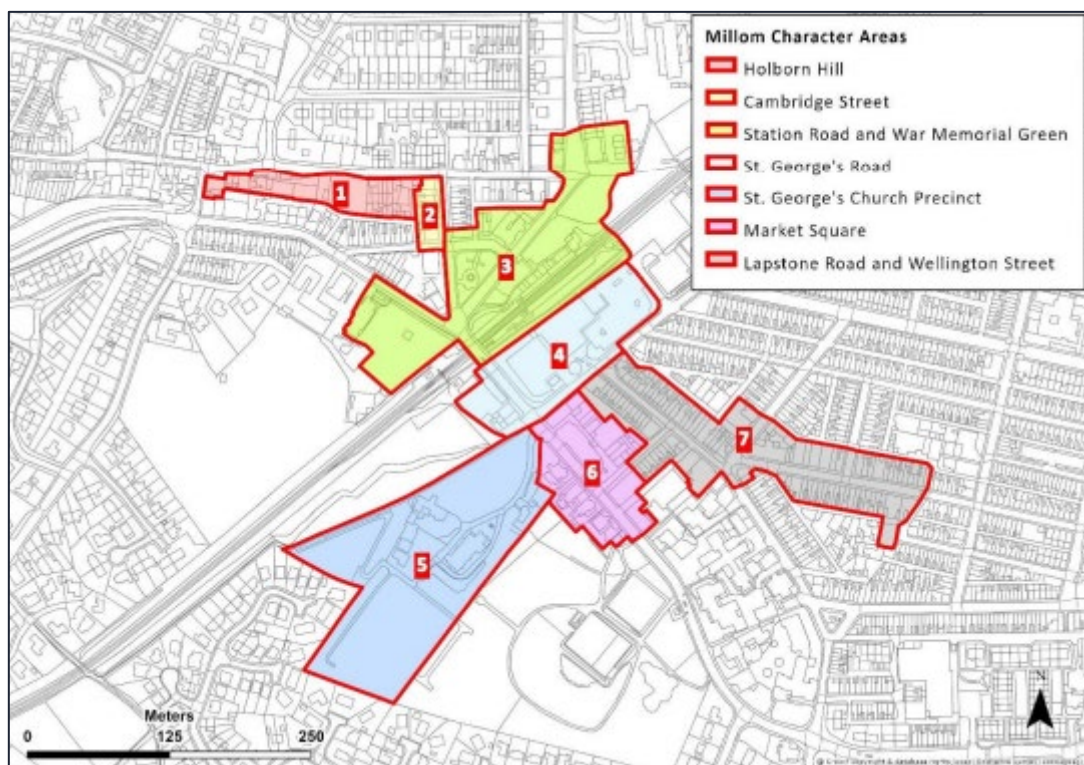


Figure 7: Character areas for Millom, forming a progression from Holborn Hill (1), through Cambridge Street (2), the green and station (3), over the bridge and railway to Tesco's (4), St George's Church precinct (5), Market Square (6) and Lapstone Road (7)

Lapstone Road and Wellington Street (Character Area 6)

- 3.27 This area is composed of residential streets laid out in a grid pattern. It is the archetypal character of New Town, although is only a small part of it, consisting of an area either side of Lapstone Road from Lancashire Road, the row of houses on St George's Terrace including Norman Nicholson's residence,

Crown Street starting at the 1884 Baptist Chapel, and Wellington Street starting at the 1889 Salvation Army fortress, leading inwards to the road junction at the 1888 Co-Op and 1894 Conservative Club.

- 3.28 St George's Terrace, which connects St George's Road with Lapstone Road, dates from 1880. Number 14 is notable for being the location in which poet Norman Nicholson was born and lived for much of his life, taking inspiration from and writing about his surroundings. The house itself is an example of a Victorian shopkeeper's premises and lodgings but is particularly valuable for its historical association.
- 3.29 This row of houses, which have variously been converted into shops, are constructed in brick but have been given rendered finishes sometime during the 20th century. Their walls are likely of solid construction as cavity wall construction was invented only in the very last years of the 19th century and didn't become widespread until the first and second decades of the 20th Century.
- 3.30 The Co-Op Hall is the most prominent building in this character area. It was and is, despite dilapidation, an impressive structure with a tower featuring aspects of gothic revival. It is faced in squared slate blocks with red sandstone ashlar dressings and slate roofs. The ground floor, where the shop units were located, has been given an unsightly coating of grey render.
- 3.31 Though there has been widespread loss of historic detailing and some notable poor maintenance of rainwater goods, this character area retains several original shop front elements, which are valuable components of its special interest. Numbers 51 and 53 Wellington Street demonstrate what can be done with these properties and serve as an example of how attractive the street could be.

4. Assessment of Impact on Significance

4.1 The proposed description of development is for:

“Change of use of premises from a library to office hub with ancillary meeting rooms and car parking”.

4.2 The application seeks permission for a change of use of the premises from the current use as a library and Council offices to an office hub and ancillary meeting rooms and car parking. There are no external physical alterations proposed to the building as part of this application. Internal refurbishment is proposed which will respect the historic nature and features of the building.

4.3 In terms of car parking the whole of this rear car park will be used for staff parking providing 22 car parking space in total, including 2 no. electric vehicle charging bays, 1 no. accessible bay and dedicated motorcycle parking. It is estimated that approximately 100 staff could be accommodated in the building - dependent on the Agile working density to be applied. Both desk space and car parking will be managed using an online booking system to ensure this capacity is not increased.

Impact on the Millom Conservation Area

4.4 The Conservation Area Appraisal (2021) describes Millom as a small former Victorian industrial town which experienced a period of rapid growth following development of large-scale iron-ore mining and iron working activities in the area. It is characterised by predominantly two-storey terraces in a mixture of red brick, roughcast render, pebble-dash, and watershot slate with red sandstone dressings. Roofs are a mixture of slate and tile.

4.5 The Conservation Area is surrounded by areas of two-storey detached and semi-detached post-war housing on its west and south sides, and the regimented late Victorian streets of the New Town on its east. The town's roofscape is relieved from certain angles by the spire of St George's Church but is otherwise quite uniformly low.

4.6 Millom contains a range of buildings that form a highly complete, albeit largely neglected, expression of mid- to late-Victorian town planning. The townscape has been relatively undisturbed by site clearance or the introduction of unfamiliar interventions, and dates for the most part to a relatively narrow timeframe between the 1860s and 1900s.

4.7 Plots for building were sold off to developers in parcels, resulting in the development of groups of buildings that are similar to one another but differ from those nearby in construction and detailing.

4.8 For the most part, it is of good although not exceptional architectural quality, though the New Town area contains a density of two-storey terraced housing interspersed with more ornate civic and

religious buildings that has the potential to be very impressive. Cambridge Street is also a notable terrace in a completely different style from the buildings on the south side of the railway. Like every part of the conservation area, New Town suffers from chronic under-maintenance and widespread unsympathetic alteration.

- 4.9 There are no physical alterations proposed as part of this application and so the external appearance of the site and building will remain unchanged. The Conservation Area Appraisal for Millom describes prolonged periods of difficulty both in maintaining its buildings and giving them long-term viable uses. Several of Millom's most attractive and high-status buildings are currently vacant.
- 4.10 Bringing this building back into active use will therefore contribute to the vitality of the Conservation Area and help ongoing maintenance and management of the building preventing it from falling into disrepair.

Visual Impact of the Proposed Development

- 4.11 This planning application primarily relates to a change of use of the building and there are no changes proposed externally. There will therefore be no visual impact as a result of the proposed development. Ensuring the ongoing occupation of this building will have a positive visual impact in that it will ensure the ongoing management and maintenance of the building preventing it from falling into disrepair.

5. Conclusion

- 6.1 This statement has demonstrated compliance with the requirements of NPPF paragraph 194 and Local Plan Policies ENV4 Heritage Assets and DM27 Built Heritage and Archaeology.
- 6.2 It is concluded that the change of use of the premises from the current use as a library and Council offices to an office hub and ancillary meeting rooms and car parking will have no detrimental impact on the character and historical significance of Millom Conservation Area as there are no external physical alterations proposed to the building as part of this application.
- 6.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal for Millom describes prolonged periods of difficulty both in maintaining its buildings and giving them long-term viable uses. Several of Millom's most attractive and high-status buildings are currently vacant. It is considered that the proposed development will sustain and enhance the character of the Conservation Area by ensuring the continued occupation of the building and therefore the ongoing management and maintenance of the building ensuring that it does not fall into disrepair.
- 6.4 No harm has been identified and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be conserved and enhanced in accordance with requirements of the 1990 Act.

Contact Details

Enquiries

Matt Verlander
Director

Visit us online
avisonyoung.co.uk

Avison Young

Central Square South, Orchard Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3AZ

© 2022 Avison Young (UK) Limited