

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Residential development of 164 dwellings (use class c3), vehicle access from Uldale View, landscaping, suds, and associated infrastructure works

Address: Land to the South of Daleview Gardens, Egremont

Reference: 4/23/2313/0F1

Date: 06/05/24

Description: Proposal is a residential development on a site currently occupied by fields, with a hedge across the middle.

Conclusion: Suggest design revisions

Assessment:

- I would focus on three main aspects to improve design quality:
 - Trees and gardens
 - Hard surfacing
 - Boundaries/edges

- Trees and vegetation
 - The site entrance is tree-lined, and there are trees within the domestic curtilages, however the visual appearance of trees within the development will have a major impact once they have matured. Are the trees on domestic curtilage protected from felling? Thought should also be given to lower level planting, such as shrubs, smaller ornamental trees, and bedding plants.
 - Streets should be tree-lined where possible
 - Margins of plots should be designed to allow corners, edges, and the gap between house frontage and street to be planted by owners.
 - Steps should be taken to restrict areas of front garden subsequently being converted into hard surfacing.

- Hard surfacing
 - Care should be taken to avoid, anywhere in the site, giving the impression of a landscape dominated by hard surfacing and parked cars.
 - This relates to the typology of house used. For instance, in places semi-detached houses have been used with parking to the sides. In other places, the parking is positioned in front of the house. The latter increases the visual impact of hard surfacing and parked cars, whereas the former reduces it.



- Semi-detached houses with the parking arranged to the sides. This increases the area available for planting in front of the house, beneficial both in providing a view out of the house and in contextualising the view of the house from the street.



- In another part of the site, parking is arranged in side-by-side bays in front of the houses. This will increase the visual impression of hard surfacing (which of course also includes the road, the pavements the footprint of the house itself, and any paved side paths within the curtilage. Almost the whole edge of the pavement in this area is driveway entrances.
- Are pavements necessary in all parts of the site? Could any of the roads be made to be shared between pedestrians and vehicles? Could these roads also be reduced in width? Increasing the priority of pedestrians and cyclists may be beneficial.

- **Boundaries and edges**
 - Fences can be designed to encourage plants to grow up them. I have seen examples that consist of a galvanised steel frame, with timber boards on one side and a mixture of timber and metal meshes or wires on the other, and climbing plants grow up these.
 - Edges should be dispensed with wherever possible. For example, at the entrance to drives, between pavements and residential streets, between adjacent front gardens. This encourages people to be more considerate of one another, and the place to feel open and shared.
- **Summary**
 - This image is from a residential development in Aalst in the Netherlands.



- This shows how at the scale of the smallest streets, there are no pavements. Pedestrians and cyclists are given priority, and pavements not needed.
- The entire street is paved, as are all the driveways. There is no damage to the paving from tree roots, no potholes or tarmac patch repairs. Because there are no hard boundaries between areas for driving, walking and parking, the whole area feels open and friendly.
- Vegetation is extensive: mature trees, small trees, shrubs and ground planting. Most views within the development are through vegetation. Despite this, there appear to be no blocked drains.
- I believe this example illustrates the value of getting trees and vegetation, hard surfacing, and edges/boundaries right to the success of the overall scheme.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

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.
- ENV4C aims to strengthen the distinctive character of settlements through high quality urban design and architecture that respect character and setting.
- DM10 emphasises the need for high quality design and quality places. Part B requires design to respond to local character at multiple scales, paying attention to plot size and arrangement, massing and scale, interstitial spaces, and materials. Part C requires the incorporation of existing features such as landscape and vernacular style.

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