

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: Discharge of conditions 4 and 5 of planning application 4/22/2100/Of1

Address: WC Block, Lancashire Road, Millom

Reference: 4/24/2310/DOC

Date: 30/09/24

Description: This building is a toilet block, currently out of use. It is located in a prominent position near the centre of Millom's conservation area.

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- Condition 4 on 4/22/2100/OF1: Full details and specification of the proposed external furniture and fixtures (including benches, rainwater harvest tanks railings, planters)
 - An image has been provided of a wooden picnic bench that seems very different from the stone benches included on the approved plans.
 - No details of other external furniture and fixtures are included (e.g. the planters, rainwater tanks, larch handrails, metal trough sink etc.) that are shown on the approved drawings.
- Condition 4 on 4/22/2100/OF1: Full details and specification of the external windows and doors
 - Details are supplied, but they are not clearly legible and do not communicate the proposed appearance adequately.
- In summary, I request clearer details on the proposed windows and clarification on the external supporting items that were important to establishing the design quality of the approved scheme.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

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

NPPF para. 194 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. 199 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. 202).

Paragraph 203 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.

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 207 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 201) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 202). In new development, opportunities should be sought to enhance or better reveal the significance of conservation areas (NPPF para. 206).

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.
- ENV4A stresses the importance of protecting listed buildings, conservation areas and other features considered to be of historic, archaeological or cultural value.
- ENV4C aims to strengthen the distinctive character of Copeland's 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.
- DM27A outlines support in principle for developments that "protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the borough's historic sites and their settings".
- DM27C outlines the restriction in principle of development within conservation areas to that which preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

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. It is therefore applicable to this application.

Sammy Woodford

Conservation and Design Officer