

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Proposal: 3no. two-storey, four-bedroomed detached dwellings with associated infrastructure

Address: The Knoll, High House Road, St Bees

Reference: 4/22/2407/0F1

Date: 21/05/24

Description: The site is a vacant, sloping plot where there formerly stood a house dating from the 1950s, which was derelict for some years before being demolished in 2021.

Conclusion: No objection

Assessment:

- Given that two of the properties will be largely concealed from the road, and the remaining house in a middling but unobjectionable style, I would recommend the following two principles to maximise the success of the design.
 - Make use of paved surfaces rather than tarmac where possible. This provides a much more lively surface than tarmac. Tarmac can additionally become cracked and patched after a few years, especially in proximity to trees.
 - Maximise the amount of planting within the site. Vegetation at a range of heights mitigates the visual impact of the buildings and cars and in combination with well-chosen paving creates visual interest.
- The boundary treatments, new planting, revised house and retention of tree cover should. I note concrete block pavers are proposed for hardstanding. Brick would complement this well for edges and marking out parking areas. Brick can also be used in a variety of different patterns to give variety. Small details like this will be important to residents.

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. 197 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.

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 206)

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).

The Copeland legacy area'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.
- ENV4B outlines support for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring assets are put to appropriate, viable and sustainable uses.
- 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.
- 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