

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Proposal: REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING WOODEN WINDOWS AND DOORS WITH UPVC WINDOWS AND DOORS

Address: LOWTHER MEDICAL CENTRE, 1 CASTLE MEADOWS, WHITEHAVEN

Reference: 4/26/2172/0F1

Date: 30/6/26

Description: Lowther Medical Centre is a relatively modern building located outside the conservation area but within the setting of the grade II* listed Catherine Mill

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- Lowther Medical Centre is within the setting of Whitehaven Conservation Area and the grade II* listed Catherine Mill.
- Catherine Mill is situated approx. 83m away at the closest point, and this part of its setting is dominated by the car parking adjacent to Castle Meadows.
- Similarly, this part of the conservation area is dominated by car parking.

The information included with the application is slightly unclear.

- The design and access statement refers to the existing windows opening outward, and the new windows matching these, however the windows shown on the “Plan and Elevations Drawing” (DCS2026-024-003) show sliding sash windows.
- It is not clear whether this document represents the existing windows, the proposed windows or both.
- The brochure included in the application documents shows a wide range of different styles, opening arrangements and colours, so it is not possible to tell from this which windows are being selected.
- The additional document called “Elevations” seems to be duplicating the information in the “Plan and Elevations Drawing”, except without showing the actual windows themselves.

Summary:

- I request clarification on whether “Plan and Elevation Drawings” shows existing, proposed or both, and specifically what the appearance is of the replacement windows (for example, are they sliding sashes or are they casements?)
- I also request clarification on the doors – the appearance of the current doors and an clarification of the proposed replacement.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 establishes a need “in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works [for the Local Planning Authority to] have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest” [Section 16(2)]. This requirement also applies to the granting of planning permission affecting a listing building or its setting [Section 66(1)].

Paragraph 139 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

NPPF para. 210 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. 212 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. 215).

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 219)

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 220 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 213-14) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 215).

The Copeland area’s Local Plan contains a number of relevant policies:

- BE1 provides for the preservation and enhancement of built heritage assets by:
 - Requiring a heritage impact assessment or heritage statement where the proposal would affect a heritage asset;
 - Giving great weight to the conservation of Copeland’s designated heritage assets when decision making;
 - Ensuring that new development is sympathetic to local character and history;
 - Supporting proposals for the appropriate reuse of vacant historic buildings, recognising that putting buildings into viable uses consistent with their conservation can help sustain and enhance their significance;
 - Supporting proposals that increase the enhancement, promotion and interpretation of Copeland’s architectural and archaeological resources;
 - Strengthening the distinctive character of Copeland’s settlements, through the application of high-quality design and architecture that respects this character and enhances the setting of heritage assets.
- BE2 states that development should preserve or enhance designated heritage assets (or important archaeological sites) and their settings. The more important the asset, the greater weight that will be given to its conservation. Proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets will be supported in principle. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification.
- DS4 outlines the Council’s expectation that all new development will meet high-quality design standards that contribute positively to the health and well-being of residents.

Sammy Woodford, Conservation and Design Officer