

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: 29/07/26

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: No objection

Assessment:

Previously I requested 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?)

- The existing windows are mostly timber mock-sashes with outward-opening top-hinged upper lights. The smaller windows are side-hinged casements. Replacements will match opening arrangement but be in uPVC.

I also requested clarification on the doors – the appearance of the current doors and an clarification of the proposed replacement.

- Information has been provided on the front doors. Currently, the door is outward opening and manually operating. This will be replaced with sliding electrical aluminium doors to allow DDA compliance. Colour can be white or grey.

I would view the impact on the conservation area’s setting and those of affected heritage assets to be negligible, and justified by the improved access and convenience.

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