

**CUMBERLAND COUNCIL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Proposal: Remove glass panes from two windows on the second floor southeast elevation. Two new aluminium ventilation louvres to be fixed to the window frames. Remove glass panes from two windows on the second floor northwest elevation. Two ventilation louvres will be also installed

Address: BT Exchange, Catherine Street, Whitehaven

Reference: 4/25/2035/OF1

Date: 24/02/15

Description: The BT Exchange is unusual in Whitehaven in being a primarily industrial building, and one of considerable mass and modernist style. However, its location and articulation to Catherine Street significantly reduce its visual impact on the conservation area, and it is in fact visible from relatively view locations, apart from at long distances, where it is set against the rising land behind it.

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- I have no objection to the proposed installation of additional ventilation louvres as these should be in keeping with the building's appearance and improve it functionally.
- I note that there is no visualisation of the louvres (this could be an example of similar, rather than a precise representation), so for the avoidance of doubt as to their visual impact, I request some information be included that shows their likely appearance.

Relevant Policies and Guidance:

Section 72 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act states that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area."

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).

Paragraph 216 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. 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.
- BE4 refers to non-designated heritage assets, saying that development should preserve or enhance such heritage assets and their settings. Proposals that better reveal the significance of heritage assets will be supported in principle. Proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets or their settings should demonstrate that consideration has been given to their significance.

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 in the legacy Copeland area. It is therefore applicable to this application.

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