

What makes conservation areas special?

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COPELAND Council is assessing some of its conservation areas in preparation for major investment on the borough - and it wants to hear from the public.

Because the planned new nuclear power station at Moorside could bring associated developments close to the conservation areas of Beckermets, Corkickle and the southern part of Whitehaven town centre, the council is creating draft 'character appraisals' that locals can read and suggest additions to.

When complete these appraisals will:

- *help the council when it is considering planning applications
- *inform developers about the possible impact of their proposals on a conservation area's character
- *help residents to comment on planning applications in conservation areas.

Lena Hogg, deputy mayor and portfolio holder for economic growth, said: "Each of Copeland's conservation areas is unique, with its own distinctive character and pattern of development. They are a big part of what makes our borough so beautiful to live and work in. Conservation areas however need to be actively managed to keep their flexibility, without losing their special qualities. These appraisals will be key to this and that's why we really want the public to contribute to them."

A character appraisal evaluates the key attributes that contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of an area. It is also an opportunity reassess the current conservation area boundaries to make sure they accurately reflect what is of special interest.

The public can read the three draft character appraisals on the council's website at www.copeland.gov.uk [3], where there will also be a feedback form for comment.

Copies of the appraisals and feedback forms will be available at the council's Market Hall office in Whitehaven, Whitehaven Library and Beckermets's Reading Rooms.

There will also be a drop-in event at Beckermets Reading Rooms at 6.30pm on July 13.

Forms should be returned to the council by the end of July.

Editors' notes

Why are we consulting?

In Copeland there are eight conservation areas ranging from one of the earliest and most complete post medieval planned towns in England to rural agricultural villages centuries old. The council is committed to protecting the borough's historic environment and has a statutory duty to periodically review conservation areas so that the impact of any development upon the character of these areas can be assessed in detail. This consultation will tell the council exactly what makes up an area's special character.

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities and are defined in law as: "Areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." The designation of a conservation area demonstrates a commitment by the local planning authority to enhance its character and to protect it from development that would harm its character.

media

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