

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	Reference No:	4/21/2536/OF1
2.	Proposed Development:	EXTENSION TO EXISTING INFANT SCHOOL AND NURSERY TO CREATE A NEW NURSERY CLASSROOM AND TOILETS
3.	Location:	ST JAMES C OF E INFANT SCHOOL, HIGH STREET, WHITEHAVEN
4.	Parish:	Whitehaven
5.	Constraints:	ASC;Adverts - ASC;Adverts, Conservation Area - Conservation Area, Coal - Standing Advice - Data Subject To Change
6.	Publicity Representations &Policy	Neighbour Notification Letter: YES Site Notice: YES Press Notice: YES Consultation Responses: See report Relevant Planning Policies: See report
7.	Report: SITE AND LOCATION <p>This application relates to the St James Church of England Infant School, situated on High Street in Whitehaven. The school has residential properties to the north and south and south east, with the school playground to the west.</p> <p>Access is taken directly from High Street.</p> <p>The site is situated within Whitehaven's Conservation Area.</p> PROPOSAL <p>Planning Permission is sought for the erection of an extension to the school on the north west side of the building. The proposed extension will be "L" shaped and will provide a new nursery classroom</p>	

and toilets. There will also be the addition of two ramped accesses and an external stairs.

The extension will be constructed from brick and render, with dark grey windows. The UPVC fascia will be white to contrast.

RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

Installation of fencing to school boundary, approved in January 2006 (application reference 4/05/2860/0 relates);

Single story flat roof extension to internal courtyard to create library/resource area, approved in June 2006 (application reference 4/06/2276/0 relates);

Extension to existing perimeter fence, approved in January 2013 (application reference 4/12/9006/0F2 relates);

Extension within courtyard area to create head teachers office, approved in February 2015 (application reference 4/14/2531/0F1 relates).

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Whitehaven Town Council

No response received.

Conservation and Design Officer

1st Response

There is no heritage statement with the application, and bearing in mind it is for new development that will affect the settings of several listed buildings, and the character and appearance of a conservation area, there should be one.

The design of the side extension should consider local significance, and look for opportunities to enhance the character and appearance of the area.

The existing building is of no great architectural quality, however the extension appears rather utilitarian, and the junction between the two is not well resolved, suggesting this will be a “tacked-on” structure that occupies a strip that currently consists of greenery and trees.

The NPPF states that design that is not of good quality should be refused, and it is not clear currently that this is well designed. In particular, the fenestration and the junction of volumes around the roofline appear suboptimal. Alternative arrangements may be found that provide a neater, more deliberate termination to the façade, resolve the roof junction better, and avoid the need for the rather bunker-like WC windows (Could the WC be located in a different part of the extension, for example?)

I request clarification on the external cladding of the building. The drawings show a horizontal board, but the Streetview image from 2018 shows brick. I do not have access to a more recent photo, so

presume this cladding must have updated within the last three years.

I also request clarification on which trees are proposed to be cut down as this is somewhat vague in the block plan.

Browsing the following list of applicable national and local laws and policies may be of assistance in revising the application. The Government's National Design Guide contains a good overview of how to ensure good design in new development.

2nd Response

There were a few points raised in my last consultation, from the 17th Dec 2021:

- The application should be accompanied by a heritage statement
- Clarification should be provided on whether it's viable to located the WC in another part of the plan, to avoid the high level slit windows needing to be in the frontage
- The way the façade is terminated could potentially be better
- The junctions where the roofs join could potentially be better
- Clarification on the external cladding was requested
- Clarification was requested on the trees to be removed

The agent has submitted some additional thoughts and information.

I agree with the agent that a piece of statement architecture would not be warranted here, and also not realistic for the school. Detail adjustments are likely to be all that's needed here.

A sketch has been provided showing revised details. This replicates the fenestration pattern to the left in the projecting bay, which helps preserve the horizontals and proportioning.

I'm a little agnostic on the grey fascia boards. While white tends to look clinical and plasticky, matching into the existing might help unify the parts of the building better. As the eye picks up the horizontal white line – particularly on darker days – extending it the full length of the frontage may work better.

However, I think the proposed contrasting render and window treatment may work. This provides a subtle bookend to the proposal without disrupting it. I presume a dark and/or neutral colour is proposed for the render to compliment the brick and grey fenestration? Confirmation of this would be useful.

Confirmation has been provided that the only trees to be removed are fairly young and located along the side of the plot. This sounds reasonable although it would be helpful if the specific trees to be removed could be indicated in red or some other more specific way.

When the drawings are updated, it would be useful to have colours indicated using an annotation for render, cladding panels, window frames etc. e.g. a RAL number.

Presently, the heritage statement is still awaited. This should precede and inform the design rather than coming at the end, so although I think these adjustments have generally moved the proposal in

the right direction, the heritage statement will still be needed to demonstrate how the proposal relates to the significance of surrounding assets, as this will help assess its impact.

3rd Response

Following my earlier queries, an updated elevation drawing and a heritage statement have been provided showing the fascia boards matching into the existing. I would view these as sufficient to be able to say the proposal is justified in conservation and design terms.

This is not the High Street Conservation Area (as mentioned in the heritage statement) as Whitehaven has only had one large conservation area since 2010, but this is just a small point to note.

I would flag the guidance on colours in the Conservation Area Design Guide, but have no further comments.

Public Representation

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and neighbour notification letters issued to 7 no. properties.

There have been no responses received as a result of these advertisements.

PLANNING POLICIES

Planning law requires applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 (Adopted December 2013)

Core Strategy

Policy ST1 – Strategic Development Principles

Policy ST2 – Spatial Development Strategy

Policy SS4 – Community and Cultural Facilities

Policy ENV4 – Heritage Assets

Development Management Policies (DMP)

Policy DM10 – Achieving Quality of Place

Policy DM22 – Accessible Developments

Policy DM27 – Built Heritage and Archaeology

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA)

Conservation Area Design Guide 2017

Emerging Copeland Local Plan

The emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 was recently the subject of a Preferred Options Consultation. The Preferred Options Consultation builds upon the completed Issues and Options Consultation which finished in January 2020. Given the stage of preparation, the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2035 has only limited weight in decision making, but provides an indication of the direction of travel of the emerging planning policies, which themselves have been developed in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework.

ASSESSMENT

Principle of development

The Policies in the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD are a material consideration when determining planning applications and carry significant weight in the decision making process. The Borough's Strategic Development Principles are set out in Policy ST1 where the general thrust is to support investment in education. Policy ST2 identifies Whitehaven as Copeland's Principal Town where the majority of development should be situated. Policy SS4 seeks to enhance the existing community facilities in order to meet the demand created by new development. Policy DM22 ensures that developments are accessible for all. The access arrangements at the school will not be altered by the proposal.

On this basis the principle of development is considered to be acceptable.

Effects on the Conservation Area and design

Although the existing building is not of any architectural quality, any development on the site will have an effect on several listed buildings adjacent to the site and the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area.

Policies ENV4 and DM27 of the Copeland Local Plan relate to the protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area and seek to ensure that any alterations are in keeping and respect the existing character of the area. Policy DM10 of the local plan requires good design.

The LBCA sets out a clear presumption that gives considerable importance and weight to the desirability of preserving a heritage asset and its setting.

Section 66.1 requires that: *'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.*

Section 72 requires that: *'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance'* of a conservation area.

The original design submitted was considered to be of poor design quality, with clunky fenestration

	<p>and roof junctions. It was also unclear what materials are to be used on the development. Further plans were submitted which were considered to be an improvement, but further amendments were requested with regards to the colour of the fascia boards.</p> <p>A final iteration of plans were received which showed the fascia boards matching the existing and some updates to the design of the flat roof and window fenestration. These were considered to be acceptable by the Conservation Officer who concluded that the extension is unlikely to have a negative effect on the Conservation Area or surrounding Listed Buildings.</p> <p>No samples or details of materials have been provided, therefore it is considered prudent to include a condition on any approval to ensure that the materials are approved by the Local Planning Authority, prior to their first use on the development.</p> <p><u>Impacts on Visual and Residential Amenity</u></p> <p>The extension to the school is proportionately acceptable with regards to the existing building and situated within the existing confines of the playground. This reduces its impact when viewed from any public viewpoints within the locality and it will be viewed in context with the existing building. The nearest residential dwellings are situated 18 metres to the north on High Street which is reflective of the existing relationship between this building and the terrace opposite. This relationship is considered to be acceptable in this instance.</p> <p><u>Trees</u></p> <p>The proposal includes the removal of a number of immature trees, mainly cherry, which are planted to the inside of the existing palisade boundary fence. It is likely that these trees are not significant enough to warrant an application for their removal, however an informative can be added to any approval to ensure that the Applicant considers this before their removal, due to the situation within the Conservation Area.</p> <p><u>Planning Balance and Conclusion</u></p> <p>There have been no objections received to the proposal. The proposed extension will enhance an existing education facility which is situated within Copeland's Principal town. This complies with the Policies of the adopted Local Plan which seek to retain and permit extensions to existing community facilities.</p> <p>The proposal will not have any significant adverse effects on the surrounding properties, highway network, Conservation Area or adjacent Listed Buildings.</p> <p>This proposal is considered to be a sustainable form of development and complies with the policies set out in the Copeland Local Plan.</p>
8.	<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Approve (commence within 3 years)</p>
9.	<p>Conditions:</p>

	<p>1. The development hereby permitted shall be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.</p> <p>Reason</p> <p>To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p> <p>2. Permission shall relate to the following plans and documents as received on the respective dates and development shall be carried out in accordance with them: -</p> <p>Site Location Plan, scale 1:1250, drawing number 1441:01, received 6th December 2021; Existing floor plans, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:02, received 6th December 2021; Existing elevations, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:03, received 6th December 2021; Proposed Roof Plan and Floor Plan, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:04, received 21st January 2022; Proposed Elevations and Section, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:05, received 21st January 2022; Proposed Floor Plans, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:06, received 21st January 2022; Proposed Elevations and Section, scale 1:100, drawing number 1441:07, received 21st January 2022; Heritage Statement, written by Underwood Associates, received 21st January 2022.</p> <p>Reason</p> <p>To conform with the requirement of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p> <p>3. Prior to their first use on the development hereby approved, representative samples of the materials to be used on the external surfaces of the development must be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development must be carried out in accordance with the approved details and so maintained thereafter.</p> <p>Reason</p> <p>To ensure a satisfactory appearance of the development in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy DM10 of the Copeland Local Plan.</p> <p>Informatives</p> <p>1) Prior to the removal of any trees on site, consideration must be given as to whether an application is required under the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation)(England) Regulations 2012.</p>
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2) The proposed development lies within a coal mining area which may contain unrecorded coal mining related hazards. If any coal mining feature is encountered during development, this should be reported immediately to the Coal Authority on 0345 762 6848.

Further information is also available on the Coal Authority website at:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/the-coal-authority

Statement

The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received, and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Sarah Papaleo

Date : 01/02/2022

Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst

Date : 02/02/2022

Dedicated responses to:- N/A