

COPELAND BOROUGH COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	Reference No:	4/22/2249/OF1	
2.	Proposed Development:	CHANGE OF USE OF PREMISES FROM LIBRARY TO OFFICE HUB WITH ANCILLARY MEETING ROOMS AND CAR PARKING	
3.	Location:	MILLOM LIBRARY, MILLOM COUNCIL CENTRE, ST GEORGES ROAD, MILLOM	
4.	Parish:	Millom	
5.	Constraints:	ASC;Adverts - ASC;Adverts, Conservation Area - Conservation Area, Coal - Off Coalfield - Data Subject To Change, Key Species - Potential areas for Natterjack Toads	
6.	Publicity Representations &Policy	Neighbour Notification Letter	Yes
		Site Notice	Yes
		Press Notice	No
		Consultation Responses	See Report
		Relevant Policies	See Report
7.	Report:		
	Site and Location		
		This application relates to Millom Library, located within the centre of Millom. The site fronts onto St Georges Road sited within the town centre and the Millom Conservation area. The building is currently used as the town’s library and the Office for Copeland Borough Council. The site benefits from a car park to the rear which is access via an alley to the northwest of the building.	
	Relevant Planning History		
		No relevant planning history.	

Proposal

This application seeks planning permission for a change of use from a library to an office hub with ancillary meeting rooms and car parking. The development will not create any external alterations to the property to accommodate the change of use, other than the demolition of the single storey link between the main building and building to the rear of the site. Any internal alterations will be carried out to respect the historic nature and features of the building, and include removal of partitions and inserts, and the insertion of a new staircase. Whilst the internal layout of the site has yet to be confirmed, plans have been submitted to show how it is likely the site will be utilised. As shown the ground floor will be utilised for a large open plan reception area with toilets and a private meeting room, an open plan secure area and a space for flexible use. It is also proposed that the first floor will accommodate two large open plan offices, toilets, two meeting rooms and a breakout area.

The rear car park currently provides 18 parking spaces. The proposed application seeks to alter the existing car park to provide 22 car parking spaces, including 2 x electric charging bays, 1 x accessible bay, and a dedicated area of motorcycling parking. The car park will utilise one of the existing access points, with the other to the rear of the car park blocked up, however this will be widened by removing the existing wall to create an easier access and egress to the site.

The submitted planning statement for this application states that there will be approximately 100 staff at the site, dependent on the Agile working density to be applied, with desks and car parking managed by an online booking system.

Consultation Responses

Millom Town Council

30th June 2022

The council have concerns in regard to the car parking area and ask that some parking spaces are available for the users of the Guide Hall, and also a disabled parking facility be made available also for users of the Guide Hall. The Guide Hall is currently used regularly by various groups during the week and weekends. People not able to park there will cause great difficulty for them especially the disabled. I trust that the planning authority will take these concerns into account when making the planning decision. I look forward to being kept in the know about this application.

Cumbria County Council – Cumbria Highways & LLFA

12th July 2022

The application form states that the site is 785m² which when compared to the CDDG's parking standard would equate to 31 required parking spaces. The applicants are proposing 21 parking bays which is below our usual standards. We appreciate that the use of the site is currently of a similar nature, but we have concerns regarding the lack of on-street parking in the area and the lack of public car parking to assist the intensification.

The transport statement explains the public transport links in the locality which is beneficial however, we would appreciate some further detail in regards to the volume of employees that will be using the proposed office space and the anticipated mode of transport they will take. This will help us to form a final recommendation. Please could the attached Transport Form be completed and returned?

27th September 2022

The application form states the building is currently used as a library and council offices. The proposal to convert the whole building into offices, is unlikely to have a significant impact on the existing highway network.

There is off-street parking available where there is also bicycle storage proposed, and the transport statement indicates there is a good public transport network in the area. I would raise concerns about the access into the accessibility bay as this 'forecourt' measures just below 4m, if possible, this should be extended or redesigned to allow more manoeuvrability in and out of this space.

It is noted that the roads and streets surrounding the site have parking restrictions on them meaning on-street parking would not be possible directly outside of this building. There is a disc parking zone opposite the building but there are no exemptions on this meaning residents and businesses would not be issued permits.

With this in mind, I can confirm that taking into account the existing use of the premises, it is unlikely the proposed change of use will have a significant impact on the existing highway conditions.

7th November 2022

Taking into account the building's town centre location and existing use, it is considered that the proposal will be unlikely to have a material effect on existing highway conditions. I can therefore confirm that the Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal.

Copeland Borough Council – Conservation and Design Officer

16th August 2022

I've had a little look through and note that there is very little changing externally. The revised car park layout doesn't appear to have any bearing on nearby heritage assets. I note that the brick wall bounding the car park is characterful and attractive and would request that the main opening, which is to be widened, is rebuilt to the same profile.

Don't appear to be any interior changes proposed, although presumably there will at some point in the future. As it's not a listed building, that would need taking into consideration if planning

permission were needed.

The heritage statement seems to miss the obvious point that this is a purpose-built library that is still in use as a library, and that use makes some contribution to its significance, and will be lost when the building is used for something else. That said, I don't think it's a major enough point to affect the fundamentals of the proposal, and I don't envisage major problems based on the evidence I've seen at this stage.

22nd September 2022

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

- The change of use in principle would appear supportable from a conservation perspective. Although this building was built as a library and depriving it of that use is therefore harmful, the new use is compatible with the space and should afford it a more assured future than it currently has. I would consider the loss of the library use to be less-than-substantial harm, compensated for by providing the building with a new viable use.
- Internally, proposals consist of removing various partitions and inserts. The removal of these would not appear to entail any harm to this non-designated heritage asset.
- Internal works also include insertion of a new staircase. In order to take into account the impact of this on the heritage asset, I would be grateful if photos could be supplied of the location where the ceiling will need opening for the new one.
- Access to the basement appears to be revised, although I'm not completely certain how this will be as it currently appears to be from a section to the rear of the building that is being removed. Clarification on this point would be appreciated.
- Externally, works are fairly minor. They involve the removal of a single-storey volume connecting the library to the old schoolroom behind, and some reordering of the car park involving enlarging the main entrance and closing up the secondary entrance.
- I expect these works to have a neutral impact on the setting of the conservation area and on the asset itself.

Summary:

I would be grateful for photos showing the location of the new internal staircase between ground and first floors, and of clarification on how access to the cellar will be arranged.

1st November 2022

Conclusion: Request further information

Assessment:

In my last consultation response, I requested more information on the ceiling of the area into which the new staircase will be inserted, the cellar access, and the fabric to be demolished as part of the conversion. Additional information has been provided, which has raised some further questions:

- I note that cellar access is unaffected.
- The photo shows the corner of the room to be chamfered at a 45° angle, with the cornicing following the wall profile. In the visualisation and in the existing and proposed floor plans this is shown as a 90° corner. Is this formed of studwork? I would be grateful for clarification on this point.
- I note that the stairwell is to be inserted hard up to the corner of the room. Would it be possible to insert it a short distance out from the walls, retaining the cornicing and making the staircase insertion more easily reversible in future?
- There is also a beam running across the ceiling with attractive cast iron columns underneath. Could confirmation be provided that these are to be retained?
- A demolition plan has been included, but doesn't highlight any changes within the single storey rear section of the building as there was no access for surveying.
 - This structure was a school added in 1913, which was attended by well-known local writer Norman Nicholson. It therefore has historic associative value as well as likely communal value in terms of collective memory.
 - The proposed drawing indicates that it will be used for flexible accommodation space but it has heritage value that should be taken into consideration.
 - The design intention for this part should be clarified, and I would be grateful for reassurance that its significance has been taken into consideration in the proposals.

4th November 2022

Conclusion: No objection

Assessment:

In my last consultation response, I requested information on the detailing of the new staircase, the retention of the cast iron columns in the reading room, and detail on what changes are proposed to the single storey rear extension at the rear.

- As the building is not listed and these details relate to works that don't require planning

permission, I am satisfied that the submitted info is sufficient to allow a decision.

National Amenities Society

No comments received.

Electricity North West

11th July 2022 & 20th September 2022

We have considered the above planning application submitted on the 21st June 2022 and find it could have an impact on our infrastructure.

The development is shown to be adjacent to or affect Electricity North West's operational land or electricity distribution assets.

Where the development is adjacent to operational land the applicant must ensure that the development does not encroach over either the land or any ancillary rights of access or cable easements. If planning permission is granted the applicant should verify such details by contacting Electricity North West, Land Rights & Consents, Frederick Road, Salford, Manchester M6 6QH.

The applicant should be advised that great care should be taken at all times to protect both the electrical apparatus and any personnel working in its vicinity.

The applicant should also be referred to two relevant documents produced by the Health and Safety Executive, which are available from The Stationery Office Publications Centre and The Stationery Office Bookshops, and advised to follow the guidance given.

The documents are as follows:-

HS(G)47 – Avoiding danger from underground services.

GS6 – Avoidance of danger from overhead electric lines.

The applicant should also be advised that, should there be a requirement to divert the apparatus because of the proposed works, the cost of such a diversion would usually be borne by the applicant. The applicant should be aware of our requirements for access to inspect, maintain, adjust, repair, or alter any of our distribution equipment. This includes carrying out works incidental to any of these purposes and this could require works at any time of day or night. Our Electricity Services Desk (Tel No. 0800 195 4141) will advise on any issues regarding diversions or modifications.

Electricity North West offers a fully supported mapping service, at a modest cost, for our electricity assets. This is a service which is constantly updated by our Data Management Team who can be contacted by telephone on 0800 195 4141 or access the website <http://www.enwl.co.uk/our-services/know-before-you-dig>

It is recommended that the applicant gives early consideration in project design as it is better value

than traditional methods of data gathering. It is, however, the applicant's responsibility to demonstrate the exact relationship on site between any assets that may cross the site and any proposed development.

Public Representation

This application has been advertised by way of a site notice, and neighbour notification letters issued to twenty-six properties. One letter of concern was received in relation to this statutory notification process providing the following comments:

- Fully support the application as it will bring business to the town which is much needed.
- However, one concern relates to parking.
- As local business owners parking is currently available to us directly to the back of the library, should this site open as an office how will residents of the building park their vehicles.
- The car park is already full to consequently the car park will not be available to use if it is allocated to residents of the office hub.
- I would be grateful if this could be given some thought so that parking that is already extremely limited remain available for local business owners.

Further to the receipt of amended plans for this application, consultations were undertaken with all previously consulted neighbours and objectors updated on this application. Four letters of objection were received in relation to this statutory notification process providing the following comments:

- How will the electric charging points affect the disabled access to the Guide Hall?
- The library was a lovely modern space and the children's library wonderful. Sad to see it go from its present premises.
- The information submitted as part of the application is poor quality a lawful decision cannot be reached on the current information.
- The "Heritage Statement" is produced by an author who claims no expertise or experience in the field and this shows when reading the document. Date stone on building is not even noticed.
- The building has far greater significance to both the conservation area and the heritage of the town and its development than is considered in the report.
- The library building is an integral part of the development of Millom.
- The building appears to be the work of the local architect E. Lillywhite of Bay View, an early surveyor of the town board.

- The Millom Gazette contains numerous notices of courses and school entrance arrangements as well as mention of first floor art rooms.
- The building was extended, first to the current boundary with Library Lane and in 1913 a single storey school was added. This became the secondary school, often referred to as the Grammar School as it was selective and fee-paying. It later served as Millom Girl's School. Hence, generations of Millom people have been educated there or associated with the cultural life of the building. It is only in recent years that Cumbria CC has neglected the building and the cultural activities have been curtailed.
- Norman Nicholson won a scholarship to the school. He was intimately associated with the building, having grown up overlooking the school yard as a neighbour, even before he attended as a pupil.
- Millom Library was a key part of the literary and religious networking which informed his art. He relied heavily on the support of the Library, especially in the production of his topographical works.
- It is clear that some books to which he referred are still shelved in Millom Library. Hence it was appropriate that the "Nicholson Reading Room" was designated and contains a bust of the poet.
- The building is obviously a central element in the cultural life of Millom although this has suffered by its falling into the indifferent hands of the County Council. Its function has changed from an early "Mechanics' Institute" to a school and library and museum over time. Physical alterations have taken place – all of which are ignored by the heritage report. The principal object of the demolition application is the main staircase. It is unclear when or why this was built – as part of the school extension or at a different time.
- No consideration is given to whether the conference facilities which are proposed could have a shared aspect perhaps with public exhibition space when the building is not in office use.
- There has been no adequate public consultation which rather undermines the assertion that this is an "heritage led proposal".
- Astonishingly, it appears that there has been no consideration of the interior of the building and not even access to the school/museum building. Attached is a condition survey with a body of photographs.
- Any coherent approach to this decision needs to be informed by a carefully conducted appraisal.
- The history of the building needs research and careful charting so that features of significance are not lost.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The heritage report clearly has not informed any of the proposed demolition works or the location of a new staircase. The approach seems to be simply one of stripping out to form featureless, bland open areas.- There is no mention of reinstating original features such as the lost Dutch gable in the roof above the main door or repair of the Library and Reading Room lettering on the façade. Both should be the subject of conditions on any consent.- Reversal of CCC's neglect is a key advantage asserted by the applicant. In the usual way, occupation of the building should be made conditional upon the restoration being satisfactorily completed in accordance with a competently conducted heritage assessment.- Loss of this public facility from the Town Centre is manifestly illiterate planning which will adversely affect the vitality and viability of the town centre and render less sustainable journeys which will no longer have combined purposes to the town centre.- The application is made in the face of national policy to restore town centres and encourage sustainable trips. This obvious loss is acknowledged by the applicant and is mitigated by promised restoration of the building and funds to ensure that the cultural amenities are replaced.- The restoration needs to be conditioned in the usual way to give assurance that it will take place satisfactorily, otherwise it is not a material consideration and paying regard to it will be a clear error of law.- Likewise, the funds provision does not appear to have been made under any binding arrangement, especially concerning how and if the funds will be translated into relevant planning benefits to offset the loss.- The actual relocation proposals of the library are known and are smaller and inferior to the existing provision.- Although there are potential advantages in terms of employment in the town and renovation of the building, these need close attention from Copeland BC's professional officers to ensure that the suggested benefits are not illusory.- I have already commented on the informal and somewhat eccentric nature of this grant/gift arrangement. Not only is it surprising that this odd mechanism is advanced by professional agents but it removes any transparency surrounding the transfer of funds between an applicant and a land owner especially where the planning authority itself has proprietary and service business interests in play.- Any planning gains must meet CIL regulations.- This "grant" is "inextricably" linked to the application to make good the acknowledged loss of |
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community facilities and also appears to be contingent upon the planning gains being provided. The eccentric “grant” arrangement, which appears to be in the public domain as merely an unstructured “gift” or some financial consideration does not make clear how the satisfactory provision of the gains are to be ensured or monitored. Once planning permission has been secured then the applicant would seem to have no interest in securing the gains with precision, or at all.

- The planning authority must assess what the relevant planning gains are. Irrelevant gains must be ignored. Gains which cannot be secured must be ignored. This assessment should have taken place before the application was opened to public participation as there is a risk that irrelevant “gains” might be taken into account and relevant gains ignored so skewing consultation responses. It is strongly questionable whether this application should have been registered in the absence of this critical detail.
- Turning to the asserted gains, these are of a wide nature and many are plainly irrelevant to the application. The loss is of the entire application site which is in community use. The land through its history has been used as such, as a club and institute, library and reading room, various school uses, meeting rooms, museum and latterly some council office use. There remains a popular, operating library which also runs community events, talks and group meetings in fairly generous accommodation. Plainly, the satisfactory location of the Library and associated uses is of key importance. The loss of viable community space in other parts of the building and land is also a tangible loss and of relevance.
- Re-location of typical town centre community uses to an edge of settlement location entails disadvantages in itself which need to be made good by the provision of satisfactory services. Inferior community facilities relocated to an inaccessible location are likely to be unpopular and fail.
- Given the actions of the County Council in denuding services and assets in Millom it cannot be discounted that this may be the calculated approach of the County Council. Nor can it be discounted that the County Council aim to provide a move as cheaply as possible and spend the £250K on projects of more interest to them than those in Millom.
- The “Hub” already exists. The asserted “creation of a community hub” is inaccurate and misleading.
- The work to the Hub is complete. There is no exhibition space. There is no café.
- The works are largely for the benefit of Copeland BC and Millom School and library provision appears to be an afterthought in manifestly unsatisfactory premises.
- No library worth the name has been “hosted”. There is a corridor, slightly enlarged. It is difficult to imagine a worse arrangement for a library arranged around a corridor leading to letting space, the school office and the Council complaints office. The work is an exercise in

cheapness rather than service provision.

- Smaller rooms existed before the library closure. No space is available for community use.
- In the former café, book cases have been crammed with minimal seating and a vending machine. This is unsuited to either quiet study or the community uses and meetings which formerly took place in the Library.
- The letting of office space to the Council/Planning Authority simply is not a relevant benefit. To the extent that this is an advantage, pecuniary or otherwise, this compromises the independence of the Planning Authority.
- Millom School is under-subscribed and has a current excess of usable floorspace. Adding to this excess is not a planning gain but merely an inefficient duplication. The presence of school-children and safeguarding considerations compromises wider community use rather than enhances it.
- No change has been made to the car park to the front of the building. Access is rendered impossible by vehicle when the school coaches are present, twice a day in term time. Pedestrian access by children or others in this chaotic arrangement is wholly unsatisfactory. School parking arrangement changes are irrelevant to the loss of the library and community facilities.
- The building alterations have been completed and the library function has moved in. It is entirely unclear, what the £250K grant has been spent on and as the community facilities catalogued in the Planning Statement have not materialized.

Development Plan

Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 (Adopted December 2013)

Core Strategy

Policy ST1 – Strategic Development Principles

Policy ST2 – Spatial Development Strategy

Policy ER5 – Improving the Quality of Employment Space

Policy ER6 – Location of Employment

Policy ER7 – Principal Town Centre, Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other Service Areas: Roles and Functions

Policy ER9 – The Key Service Centres, Local Centres and other small centres

Policy ER11 – Developing Enterprise and Skills

Policy SS4 – Community and Cultural Facilities

Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species

Policy T1 – Improving Accessibility and Transport

Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy ENV4 – Heritage Assets

Development Management Policies (DMP)

Policy DM10 – Achieving Quality of Place

Policy DM21 – Protecting Community Facilities

Policy DM22 – Accessible Developments

Policy DM27 – Built Heritage and Archaeology

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (2021)

National Design Guide (NDG).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Conservation Area Design Guide SPD (Adopted December 2017)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (CHSR)

Emerging Copeland Local Plan (ELP):

The emerging Copeland Local Plan 2021-2038 comprising the Publication Draft (January 2022) and Addendum (July 2022) have recently been submitted for examination by the Planning Inspector. As set out at Paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Planning Authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan; the extent to which objections to relevant policies have been resolved; and the degree to which emerging policies are consistent with the NPPF. Given the stage of preparation of the emerging Copeland Local Plan 2017-2038 some weight can be attached to policies where no objections have been received or objections have been resolved.

The Publication Draft (January 2022) and Addendum (July 2022) 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 NPPF.

Assessment

The key issues raised by this application relate to the principle of the development; loss of community facility; growth of business; impact of the development on the surrounding area including

the Conservation Area; impact on highways/parking; and drainage.

Principle of Development

Policy ST1, ST2 and ER6 of the Copeland Local Plan seeks to concentrate development within the defined settlement boundaries in accordance with the Borough's settlement hierarchy. The application site lies within the designated settlement boundary for Millom which is identified as one of the Borough's Key Service Centres in Policy ST2 of the Copeland Local Plan. This policy provides opportunities for both the start-up and expansion of existing employment sites, with a focus on linkages to the nuclear sector and tourism. Policy ST1 and the NPPF also encourage the reuse of existing buildings and previously developed land wherever possible directing development from greenfield site.

This application seeks to change the use of the existing building to an office hub associated with the nuclear sector, introducing a new business into this Key Service Centre. The principle of this development is therefore considered to be acceptable.

Loss of a Community Facility

Policies ST1, ST2, SS4 and SS5 of the Copeland Local Plan and Section 6 and 8 of the NPPF seek to encourage the provision and retention of good quality services and facilities which meet the needs of local communities and are accessible by public transport, cycling or on foot. Policy SS4 of the Copeland Local Plan also allows for the expansion and or enhancement of existing community and cultural facilities to assist continuing viability, particularly in areas where new development will increase the demand for facilities. Policy DM21 states that developments which would result in the loss of an existing social, community, cultural or sports facility will be resisted where there is evidence that there is a demand for that facility that is unlikely to be met elsewhere.

The building is currently used as the town's library and the Office for Copeland Borough Council. These services are to be relocated to the Millom Hub located on Salthouse Road, within walking distance of the current site. The submitted planning statement for this application states that this change of use and relocation of staff to this site is inextricably linked with a £250,000 grant funding provided by the applicant, Sellafield Ltd, to Cumbria County Council for the Millom Hub. The agent for this application has confirmed that this funding is separate to the transaction of the building but dependent upon it, the transaction of the building is triggered by receipt of planning permission.

This project will help to facilitate a range of activities and work toward creating set spaces around the town as part of the vision for the Town Deal. This funding will be used to create a community hub that will house a range of services and provide flexible space for multiple uses by the public and other users of the Hub, reorganisation of the existing Hub to reconfigure the building to enhance services, use of smaller rooms for tech training and skill support, the creation of discreet facilities for off-site meetings for Millom School, staff and parents, and will allow for a clear definition between the car park with a separate bus lane being created to ensure safe access to and from the facility.

Concerns have been raised by one objector with regard to how the Local Planning Authority will secure this funding and therefore how the application will prevent the loss of this community facility. The funding however is not part of the planning process and cannot be secured by any form of planning obligation. Confirmation has been provided that this facility will be relocated to the Millom Hub, the development therefore does not result in the loss of a community facility and is considered to comply with Policy SS4 and DM21 of the Copeland Local Plan which seek to protect and retain facilities for which meet the needs of local communities.

Growth of Business

Policy ST1, ST2, and ER6 of the Copeland Local Plan seek to facilitate grow of the Borough's local economy. Policy ER7 seeks to promote the diversification of the Borough's economy by expanding new and existing employment sectors, and by supporting the development of commercial units, which meet the needs of business, encourage start up and promote further expansion in order to retain enterprise, jobs and skills within the Borough. The NPPF also states that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt.

The proposed change of use seeks to utilise a prominent building within the centre of Millom and seeks to create an office hub for the NDA within the south of the Borough. The proposal will introduce a key employer into one of the Borough's Key Service Centres, which will enhance the vitality and viability of the area.

On this basis it is considered that the proposal complies with the policies ST1, ST2, ER6 and ER7 of the Copeland Local Plan and NPPF.

Impact of Development on Surrounding Area

Policy ST1, DM10 and section 12 of the NPPF seeks protection of residential amenity, a high standard of design, fostering of quality places, and proposals, which respond to the character of the site.

The proposal will utilise the existing building and does not seek any external alteration to the property, other than a minor structure being demolished to the rear of the site. The means of access will remain as existing and parking facilities within the site will be increased within the existing rear car park. The development is therefore not considered to have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring properties or the overall streetscene.

On the basis of the above it is considered that the proposal complies with ST1 and DM12 of the Local Plan and section 12 of the NPPF.

Impact on Conservation Area & Heritage Asset

Policy ST1, ENV4, DM27 of the Copeland Local Plan seek to protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic, cultural and architectural character of the Borough's historic sites.

Section 72 of the 1990 Act states that “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of [a conservation] area.”

Paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that “Development that is not well designed should be refused”.

NPPF para. 197 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. 199 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. 202).

Paragraph 203 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.

Opportunities should be sought for new development within conservation areas and the settings of heritage assets that enhances or better reveals their significance. (para. 206)

Referring to assets in a conservation area, NPPF para. 207 states that loss of an element that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as either substantial (under para. 201) or less-than-substantial harm (under paragraph 202).

The Council’s Conservation Officer has reviewed this application and has advised that the change of use is supportable in principle. Whilst the Officer has stated that although the building was built as a library and depriving of that use is harmful the proposed use is compatible with the space and will secure a viable use for the future, therefore this has a less-than-substantial harm. Overall, the Officer has stated that the proposed minor external works to the building will have a neutral impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the Heritage Asset. More detail was requested with regard to some of the internal alterations. Although some detail was provided in terms of the internal works including the internal staircase and cellar access, this raised additional questions from the Conservation Officer. However, as the site is not listed and the internal works do not require planning permission the agent stated that this request for additional detail was excessive and requested that the application was determined based on the current information submitted. Based on this the Conservation Officer confirmed that he has no objections to the application.

One resident has submitted an objection to this development due to the impact of the change of use on the existing library building and the lack of detail provided in terms of the heritage significance of the building. The application is supported by a Heritage Statement and no objections have been received from the Council’s Conservation Officer or the National Amenities Society, therefore it is considered that sufficient information has been received to determine this application.

Given the limited alterations to the building the proposed change of use is considered to protect and conserve this non designated heritage asset and preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. The development is considered to have a less-than-substantial harm and it is therefore considered that the proposal complies with policies of the Copeland Local Plan, the guidance in the NPPF and meets the tests of the Act.

Impact on Highway/Parking

Policy DM22 of the Copeland Local Plan requires developments to be accessible to all users and to meet adopted car parking standards, which reflect the needs of the Borough in its rural context. Section 9 of the NPPF promotes sustainable transport.

The application site currently benefits from a rear car park providing 18 off street parking spaces. As part of this change of use alterations to this car park are proposed creating 22 car parking spaces, including 2 x electric charging bays, 1 x accessible bay, and a dedicated area of motorcycling parking. The application site is located within the centre of one of the Borough's Key Service Centres. Given the town centre location the site is considered to be within a sustainable location and benefits from a number of public transport links including the railway station. The site is also accessible by foot for those who live in the locality and the proposal includes an area for motorcycles and bike storage, meaning users of the development are not reliant on cars to access the site. The submitted planning statement for this application also states car parking will be managed by an online booking system as part of the office use.

Initially, Cumbria Highways raised some concerns regarding the number of spaces to be provided to serve the office building, and therefore requested the submission of a transport form to secure additional detail with regard to the proposed number of employees utilising the site and their anticipated modes of transport. Following the receipt of this information, Cumbria Highways have confirmed that given the existing use of the site it is unlikely that the proposed change of use to an office will have a significant impact on the existing highways conditions.

Concerns have been raised from the Town Council and neighbours regarding the continued use of parking spaces within the site for the adjacent Guide Hall and also local business owners who currently utilise this car park. The agent for this application has provided a letter from the owners of the site which confirms that no formal rights have been granted for businesses, residents, or users of the adjoining Guide Hall to park on this private car parking area, those using this area are currently ignoring signage restricting this parking area. This letter does, however, confirm that access to the Guide Hall building will be retained. Given the current restrictions on this car parking area the proposed change of use is not considered to create parking problems for the local community.

Although the site provides a limited amount of parking, the site is located within a sustainable location with a number of public transport options, therefore the development is considered to be compliant with the Policy DM22 of the Copeland Local Plan and Section 9 of the NPPF.

	<p><u>Ecology</u></p> <p>Policies ST1, ENV3 and DM25 of the Copeland Local Plan and section 15 of the NPPF outline how the Council will protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity within the Borough. These policies set out the approach towards managing development proposal that are likely to have an effect on nature conservation sites, habitats and protected species.</p> <p>The application site is identified as a potential area for natterjack toads. The application is not supported by any ecology details as the site is not located within 200m of a watercourse (as indicated within the ALGE trigger list) and is located within the centre of a built-up residential area. On this basis it is considered that this is not a habitat that is likely to contain natterjack toads and so it would not be necessary to seek an ecological survey for this minor application. Furthermore, the change of use is retained within the existing footprint of the building with no extensions proposed, therefore the development will not disturb any habitats.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that the development complies with policies ST1, ENV3 and DM25 of the Copeland Local Plan and NPPF.</p> <p><u>Planning Balance & Conclusion</u></p> <p>The proposed change of use will create an office base for a key employer within one of the Borough's Key Service Centres. The prominent town centre building is currently used as the town's library and the Office for Copeland Borough Council. These facilities will be relocated elsewhere within Millom to ensure their retention for the local community. The proposal will provide a viable use for the building and will benefit the vitality and viability of the town centre.</p> <p>The change of use will be accommodated within the existing structure of the building with minimal external alterations proposed. Given the limited alterations to the building the proposed change of use is considered to protect and conserve this non designated heritage asset and preserve the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. The development is considered to have a less-than-substantial harm</p> <p>Although the site provides a limited amount of parking it is located within a sustainable location with a number of public transport options available. Cumbria Highways have confirmed that given the existing use the proposal will not have a significant impact on highway safety. There are also no objections in terms of impact on ecology.</p> <p>The proposal is therefore considered to be an acceptable form of sustainable development which is compliant with policies of the Copeland Local Plan and the provisions of the NPPF.</p>
8.	<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Approve (commence within 3 years)</p>

9.	<p>Conditions:</p> <p><u>Standard Conditions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must be commenced before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. <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> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. This permission relates to the following plans and documents as received on the respective dates and development must be carried out in accordance with them:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Location Plan, Scale 1: 1:1250, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Site Plan – Existing, Scale 1:500, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Site Plan – Proposed (Amended), Scale 1:500, Drawing No: M10, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 5th September 2022. - Basement, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: M01, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Ground Floor, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: M02, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Upper Floors, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: M03, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Elevations 1 – 8, Scale 1:100, Drawing No: M05, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Elevations 1 – 13, Scale 1:100, Drawing No: M06, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Car Park Existing (Amended), Scale 1:200, Drawing No: M08, Revision: B, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 27th July 2022. - Car Park Proposed (Amended), Scale 1:200, Drawing No: M09, Revision B, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 26th October 2022. - Transport Statement, Prepared by Vectos May 2022, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022. - Planning Statement, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022.
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- Heritage Statement, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 7th June 2022.
- Demolition Area Plan, Scale 1:150, Drawing No: D01, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 27th July 2022.
- GF Proposed, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: P01, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 27th July 2022.
- FF Proposed, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: P02, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 27th July 2022.
- Letter from Cumbria County Council, Dated 25th July 2022, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 27th July 2022.
- Transport Form, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 28th July 2022.
- Car Park Wall Elevation Drawings, Scale 1:100, Drawing No: P03, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 5th September 2022.
- Proposed Stairs, Scale 1:1 & 1:100, Drawing No: P04, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 26th October 2022.
- Ground Floor, Scale 1:75, Drawing No: D02, Rev: A, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 26th October 2022.

Reason

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.

Prior to Use/Occupation Conditions:

3. The building must not occupied/brought into use as an office until the rear car park has been altered and additional parking spaces brought into use in accordance with the approved plans:
 - Car Park Proposed (Amended), Scale 1:200, Drawing No: M09, Revision B, received by the Local Planning Authority on the 26th October 2022.

The rear car park must be retained and capable of use at all times thereafter and must not be removed or altered without the prior consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason

To ensure a minimum standard of access provision when the development is brought into use.

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: C. Burns		Date : 10.11.2022
Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst		Date : 16.11.2022
Dedicated responses to:-		