

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	Reference No:	4/25/2184/0F1
2.	Proposed Development:	EXTENSION AND ALTERATIONS TO SEASCALE LIBRARY TO FORM SEASCALE COMMUNITY HUB - WORKS INCLUDE AN INCREASE IN THE ROOF PITCH TO MAIN BUILDING AND REPLACING THE FLAT ROOF WITH A PITCHED ROOF TO SIDE OFFSHOOT OVER NEW CRAFT AREA
3.	Location:	SEASCALE LIBRARY, GOSFORTH ROAD, SEASCALE
4.	Parish:	Seascale
5.	Constraints:	<p>ASC Adverts</p> <p>Safeguard Zone</p> <p>Coal - Off Coalfield</p> <p>Key Species - Potential areas for Natterjack Toads</p> <p>DEPZ Zone</p> <p>Outer Consultation Zone - Drigg 3KM</p> <p>Outer Consultation Zone - Sellafield 10KM</p> <p>PROWs - Public Right of Way</p>
6.	Publicity Representations & Policy	<p>Neighbour Notification Letter: YES</p> <p>Site Notice: Yes</p> <p>Press Notice: No</p> <p>Consultation Responses: See report</p> <p>Relevant Planning Policies: See report</p>

7. **Report:**

SITE AND LOCATION

The property is located within the village of Seascale and is set back from the main throughfare through the village by a small area of grass to the front of the building plus the footway and a small grass verge. The site lies adjacent to a health centre to the north east, residential dwellings to the south and east, plus the grounds of Saint Joseph's Church to the west. The current site comprises a single storey detached building of modern design with both flat and single pitch roofs and associated parking area.

The site is bound by the access road to the health centre adjacent to the western elevation and the car park serving the library is to the east of the building. The site is located within an area dominated by modern commercial and residential properties.

PROPOSAL

The application seeks planning permission for the erection of a small extension to the front elevation to form a new extension to the library building to aid in creating the Seascale Community Hub. There would be some minor internal reconfiguration alongside the extension. The existing flat roofs would be altered to mono pitches with the main roof on the existing building increased and carried across both the existing building and proposed extension. A new canopy and external ramp would be installed to the main entrance.

The extension would be sited on an external area that at present is laid to grass and would be constructed of brick walls, black upvc rainwater goods, white upvc windows and doors under a single ply membrane grey roof with solar panels.

The proposal extension would measure 4.68m in projection from the front elevation x 6.75m in width x 5.4m in height.

RELEVANT PLANNING APPLICATION HISTORY

No relevant site history.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Parish Council

No objections

Highways Authority/LLFA

No objections as it is considered that it will not have a material effect on existing highway conditions nor will it increase the flood risk on the site or elsewhere.

Public Representations

The application has been advertised by way of neighbour notification letter and site notice – one letter of representation has been received in relation to the application which sets out that the proposal exceeds the exemption limits for Biodiversity Net Gain.

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

On 1st April 2023, Copeland Borough Council ceased to exist and was replaced by Cumberland Council as part of the Local Government Reorganisation of Cumbria.

Cumberland Council inherited the local development plan documents of each of the sovereign Councils including Copeland Borough Council, which combine to form a Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland.

The inherited local development plan documents continue to apply to the geographic area of their sovereign Councils only.

The Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland comprises the Development Plan for Cumberland Council until replaced by a new Cumberland Local Plan.

Copeland Local Plan 2021-2039:

The council has agreed to adopt the Local Plan on 5 November and full weight is given to the policies contained within.

The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

Strategic Policy DS1 - Settlement Hierarchy

Policy DS4 – Design and Development Standards

Strategic Policy DS6 - Reducing Flood Risk

Policy DS7 - Sustainable Drainage

Strategic Policy E1 - Economic Growth

Strategic Policy SC1 - Health and Wellbeing

Policy SC5 - Community and Cultural Facilities

Policy CO7 – Parking Standards

Strategic Policy N3 - Biodiversity Net Gain

Other Material Planning Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF)

Cumbria Development Design Guide

ASSESSMENT

The key issues raised by this proposal are the principle of development, its scale and design and the potential impacts on residential amenity,

Principle of Development

The proposed application relates to the extension of the library serving Seascale in the form of a small extension to the front of the building, plus alterations to the existing property. Policies within the local plan support the development of a broad range of services within Local Service Centre's which includes the village of Seascale. Policy DS1 seeks to support the retention and growth of small-scale existing services and businesses.

The introduction of further space within the library building also aids other policies in allowing an increase in availability of space within the building to support the existing use and allow other community services being able to utilise the space.

On this basis, the principle of the development is therefore considered to be acceptable with the extension satisfying the requirements of Policies DS1, DS4 and SC5 of the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2039 and the guidance set out within the NPPF.

Scale and Design

Policy DS4 and section 12 of the NPPF seek to promote high quality designs, the Local Plan seek to ensure extensions and alterations are of an appropriate scale and design which is appropriate to their surroundings and does not adversely affect the amenities of adjacent occupiers. Given the site limitations with the existing building built up to boundaries and the potential loss of existing parking areas there are limited opportunities to expand the site.

The existing building has both flat and single pitched roofs of modern designs and styles with the new extension forming a single pitched roof, the main part of the existing building will be re-roofed and re-modelled with the installation of solar panels, there would be an increase in height by 1.1m, to a total height of 5.4m. The new roof pitch is not considered to be significantly higher than the existing building and is deemed to be acceptable. The other flat roof sections of the building will be upgraded to single pitches to reflect the main roof structure.

The proposal being on the front elevation adjacent to the highway would be widely visible from a public perspective. Given the modest scale and projection of the extension, it is considered that the development would not have any negative effects on the appearance of the building from a public point of view; nor, have any negative effects on the street scene.

The design and materials have been chosen to reflect the existing building and would not be out of character with the property and surrounding area; therefore, the design and materials are considered to be acceptable and would not detract from the overall appearance of the property; with the alterations to the existing building being considered to have a positive impact on the appearance.

The extension is small in scale in the context of the existing site and is seen to be ancillary scale to the host property. Although there would be a small loss of green space to create the new extension it is considered that the loss of this area would be outweighed by the expansion of existing community facilities.

The scale and design of the proposal is considered to comply with policy.

Residential Amenity

DS4 of the Local Plan and Chapter 12 of the NPPF seek to safeguard good levels of residential amenity of the parent property or adjacent dwellings.

Given the setback distance from the nearest residential properties and use of the existing building, it is considered that the residential properties within the area would not be affected by the proposal any more than the existing facilities.

The proposals are not considered to introduce any issues with overlooking from the extension any more than the existing situation.

The extension would not to be deemed to have any overbearing effects on the adjoining properties.

Given its existing use as a library, the introduction of a further small extension would not increase in noise levels above the existing situation.

It is considered that no significant residential amenity issues are raised by the proposal over and above the existing arrangement.

Highway Safety

The access into the site would remain unchanged; the highways authority has not raised any objections to the proposal. It is considered that there is sufficient parking and turning within the curtilage of the site as a whole for the proposed use without compromising the parking available. The potential small increase in vehicles using the facility would not be significant to require any additional parking requirements plus there is on street parking within the vicinity of the site.

The applicant has confirmed that the access door to the western elevation is to be used as an emergency exit only, therefore it is considered that no health and safety implications are raised with a new pedestrian access onto the access route to the health centre.

	<p>The nearby public right of way would be unaffected by the proposal and there would be no impacts to its enjoyment of use given it is separated from the development by the church and associated curtilage.</p> <p><u>Biodiversity Net Gain</u></p> <p>Originally the proposal was marginally above the 25m² threshold relating to assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) at 26.75m². As the threshold had been exceeded officers requested that either an assessment for the BNG is undertaken, including the completion of the matrix and provision of BNG or alternatively, the extension could be marginally reduced to bring it under the 25m². The applicant has reduced the size of the extension with the loss of green space now being under 25m² and therefore an assessment of BNG is not required as it would fall under the de minimis threshold.</p> <p><u>Ecology</u></p> <p>The application site is identified as being a potential area for Natterjack Toads. The application site is located within a built-up residential and commercial area and forms a very small area of well-maintained grass with no evidence of ecological disturbance.</p> <p>On this basis it is considered that it would not be necessary to seek a protected species survey for this minor application as the location of the works being carried out relate to an area that already contains a mix of hard surface and maintained grass in an urban setting, and therefore it is not considered that this development will disturb any habitats</p> <p><u>Planning Balance and Conclusion</u></p> <p>The proposed extensions to the library are of an acceptable scale and design with no significant harm arising to neighbouring properties in terms of amenity. There are no significant impacts on the appearance of the building or surrounding area. The proposal is therefore considered to be an acceptable form of development in line with policies within the Local plan.</p>
8.	<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Approve (commence within 3 years)</p>
9.	<p>Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The development hereby permitted must commence 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>

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: -

Application Form, received 3 June 2025;
 Site Location Plan, scale 1:1250, drawing reference 5754 002 Rev P1 - received 3 June 2025;
 Proposed Floor Plans and elevations scale 1:50 and 1:100 drawing reference 5754 001 Rev A - amended plan received 13 June 2025;
 Proposed Roof Plans scale 1:100 drawing reference 5754 004 Rev A - amended plan received 13 June 2025;

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.

Biodiversity Net Dain – Not Applicable

The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition (biodiversity gain condition) that development may not begin unless:

- (a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and
- (b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan, if one is required in respect of this permission would be Cumberland Council.

There are statutory exemptions which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will not require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because one of the statutory exemptions is considered to apply.

Applicable exemption: Development subject to the de minimis exemption. Development that does not impact a priority habitat and impacts less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) of onsite habitat, and 5 metres of linear habitats such as hedgerows.

	<p>Statement</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Case Officer: Sarah Smith</p>	<p>Date : 30/07/25</p>
<p>Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst</p>	<p>Date : 31/07/2025</p>
<p>Dedicated responses to:- N/A</p>	