



Historic England

Ms Christie Burns
Cumberland Council
The Market Hall
Market Place
Whitehaven
Cumbria
CA28 7JG

Our ref: P01595151

15 July 2025

Dear Ms Burns

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND TO REAR OF HUNTER RISE, BECKERMET
Application No. 4/25/2200/0F1**

Thank you for your letter of 10 July 2025 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice

Significance

The site is partially located in Beckermets Conservation Area and is adjacent to two listed buildings at Barwickstead Farm: the barn and hennery-piggery. The village is characterised by the use of warm red sandstone as a building material, local roofing slate, cobbled surfaces, and with gables facing onto the road.

The conservation area is significant in that it defines the historic village of Beckermets, which grew up in the middle ages around the confluence of two streams and formerly consisted of two separate parishes. Linear development extended north and east of the stream confluence with a piecemeal mixture of farmsteads and cottages facing the main road and burgage strips extending to the rear of properties. The development site is located in one of the few remaining burgage plots, and its boundaries are unlikely to have changed since the medieval period. This open space contributes to the significance of the conservation area and provides the setting for the listed buildings at Barwickstead Farm.



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

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There is no Heritage Assessment with the submitted planning documents, and no assessment of the significance and character of the Beckermest Conservation Area or an assessment of the impacts of the development.

Impacts

The proposals seek to develop the site and construct nine detached houses. Access to the site will be via Fleming Drive to the west, however there will be one house accessed from Morass Road.

The impact of the development will be to cause harm to the significance of the conservation area by infilling an important historic open space, and by affecting the setting of key historic buildings within the conservation area.

The design and materiality of the proposed houses does not sit comfortably within the street scene. There is no precedent for the use of red brick, and the buildings do not take any cues from the established vernacular style in the village - they are too uniform and characterless in style. The development would be visible extending south-westwards up the hill from Morass Road and would detract from the interesting variety of historic properties in the village.

Policy

National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024). These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (para. 202) and that applicants should describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting, to a level sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (para. 207).

When considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to an asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be (para. 212). Paragraph 219 of the NPPF states that new development within conservation areas and within the setting of heritage assets should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal significance. Any harm to significance requires clear and convincing justification (para. 213).



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In practice that means that less harmful alternative solutions should be explored through the pre-application and application processes. Para. 215 instructs that the Council should eventually weigh harm against the public benefits of proposals in judging the planning balance.

Position

We are concerned that the proposed development will cause harm to the significance of the Beckermest Conservation Area, and to the setting of the grade II listed Barwickstead Barn and hennery-piggery. The proposals do not enhance or better reveal the significance of the conservation area, contrary to para. 219 of the NPPF, and are not of a high enough quality in terms of design or materiality.

We are also concerned that the planning application is not accompanied by an assessment of the significance of the Conservation Area or the impacts of the development on that significance, contrary to para. 207 of NPPF. Understanding what is significant about a designated heritage asset is a crucial first step when designing new developments so their impact can be minimised and so they can sit comfortably in the street scene without causing harm.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 207 and 219 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. You should also bear in mind section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.



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Yours sincerely

Louise Davies

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas



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